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LETTERS OF

HORACE WALPOLE

MRS. PAGET TOYNBEE

HENRY FROWDE, M.A.
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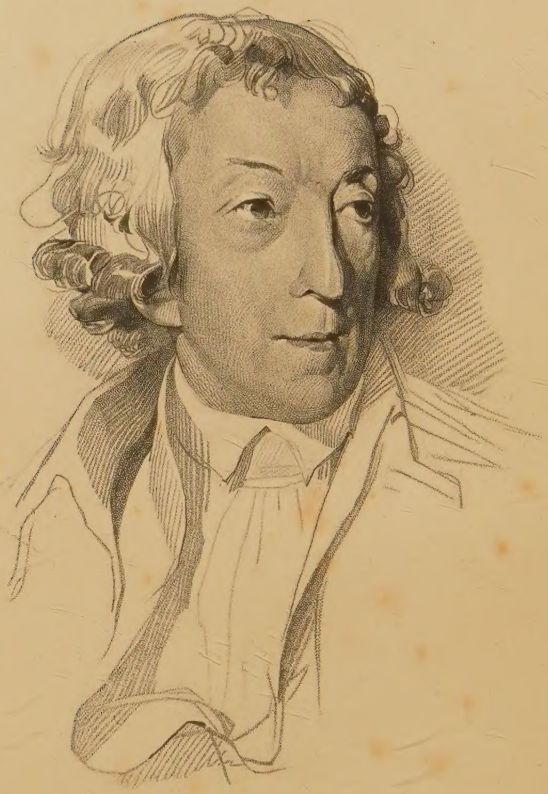

Emery Walker Ph.Sc

Horace Walpole, fourth Earl of Orford

from a print after a drawing by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.

THE LETTERS

OF

HORACE WALPOLE

FOURTH EARL OF ORFORD

CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED

AND EDITED WITH NOTES AND INDICES

BY

MRS. PAGET TOYNBEE

IN SIXTEEN VOLUMES

WITH PORTRAITS AND FACSIMILES

VOL. XII: 1781—1783

OXFORD

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

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THE LETTERS

OF

HORACE WALPOLE

2181. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Berkeley Square, May 28, 1781.

This letter, like an embarkation, will not set out till it has gotten its complement; but I begin it, as I have just received your second letter. I wrote to you two days ago, and did not mean to complain; for you certainly cannot have variety of matter in your sequestered isle: and since you do not disdain trifling news, this good town, that furnishes nothing else, at least produces weeds, which shoot up in spite of the *Scotch thistles*, that have choked all good fruits. I do not know what Lady Craven designs to do with her play[1]; I hope, act it only in private; for her other was murdered, and the audience did not exert the least gallantry to so pretty an authoress, though she gave them so fair an opportunity. For my own play, I was going to publish it in my own defence, as a spurious edition was advertised here, besides one in Ireland. My advertisement has overlaid the former for the present, and that tempts me to suppress mine, as I have a thorough aversion to its appearance. Still, I think I shall produce it in the dead of summer, that it may be forgotten by winter; for I could not bear having it the subject of conversation in

Letter 2181.—[1] A musical farce by Lady Craven, called *The Silver Tankard*, was acted at the Haymarket Theatre in 1781.

a full town. It is printed; so I can let it steal out in the midst of the first event that engrosses the public; and as it is not quite a novelty, I have no fear but it will be still-born, if it is twin with any babe that squalls and makes much noise.

At the same time with yours I received a letter from another cousin at Paris, who tells me Necker is on the verge, and in the postscript says he has actually resigned. I heard so a few days ago: but this is a full confirmation. Do you remember a conversation at your house, at supper, in which a friend of yours spoke very unfavourably of Necker, and seemed to wish his fall? In my own opinion they are much in the wrong. It is true, Necker laboured with all his shoulders to restore their finances; yet I am persuaded that his attention to that great object made him clog all their military operations. They will pay dearer for money; but money they will have: nor is it so dear to them, for, when they have gotten it, they have only not to pay. A Monsieur Joly de Fleury is Comptroller-General. I know nothing of him; but as they change so often, some able man will prove minister at last—and there they will have the advantage again.

Lord Cornwallis's courier, Mr. Broderick, is not yet arrived; so you are a little precipitate in thinking America so much nearer to being subdued, which you have often swallowed up as if you were a minister; and yet, methinks, that era has been so frequently put off, that I wonder you are not cured of being sanguine—or rather, of believing the magnificent lies that every trifling advantage gives birth to. If a quarter of the Americans had joined the Royalists, that had been said to join, all the colonies would not hold them. But, at least, they have been like the trick of kings and queens at cards; where one of two goes back every turn to fetch another. However, this is only for conversation for

the moment. With such aversion to disputation, I have no zeal for making converts to my own opinion, not even on points that touch me nearer.

Thursday, May 31.

If you see the papers, you will find that there was a warm debate yesterday on a fresh proposal from Hartley for pacification with America; in which the ministers were roundly reproached with their boasts of the returning zeal of the colonies; and which, though it ought by their own accounts to be so much nearer complete, they could not maintain to be at all effectual; though even yesterday a report was revived of a second victory of Lord Cornwallis. This debate prevented another on the Marriage Bill, which Charles Fox wants to get repealed, and which he told me he was going to labour. I mention this from the circumstance of the moment when he told me so. I had been to see if Lady Aylesbury was come to town: as I came up St. James's Street, I saw a cart and porters at Charles's door; coppers and old chests of drawers loading. In short, his success at faro has awakened his host of creditors; but unless his bank had swelled to the size of the Bank of England, it could not have yielded a sop apiece for each. Epsom, too, had been unpropitious; and one creditor has actually seized and carried off his goods, which did not seem worth removing. As I returned full of this scene, whom should I find sauntering by my own door but Charles? He came up and talked to me at the coach-window, on the Marriage Bill, with as much *sang-froid* as if he knew nothing of what had happened. I have no admiration for insensibility to one's own faults, especially when committed out of vanity. Perhaps the whole philosophy consisted in the commission. If *you* could have been as much to blame, the last thing you would bear well would be your own reflections. The more marvellous Fox's parts

are, the more one is provoked at his follies, which comfort so many rascals and blockheads, and make all that is admirable and amiable in him only matter of regret to those who like him as I do.

I did intend to settle at Strawberry on Sunday; but must return on Thursday, for a party made at Marlborough House for Princess Amelia. I am continually tempted to retire entirely; and should, if I did not see how very unfit English tempers are for living quite out of the world. We grow abominable peevish and severe on others, if we are not constantly rubbed against and polished by them. I need not name friends and relations of yours and mine as instances. My prophecy on the short reign of faro is verified already. The bankers find that all the calculated advantages of the game do not balance pinchbeck *parolis* and debts of honourable women. The bankers, I think, might have had a previous and more generous reason, the very bad air of holding a bank:—but this country is as hardened against the *petite morale*, as against the greater.—What should I think of the world if I quitted it entirely?

2182. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, June 3, 1781.

You know I have more philosophy about *you* than courage, yet for once I have been very brave. There was an article in the papers last week that said a letter from Jersey mentioned apprehensions of being attacked by four thousand French. Do you know that I treated the paragraph with scorn? No, no; I am not afraid for your island, when you are at home in it, and have had time to fortify it, and have sufficient force. No, no; it will not be surprised when you are there, and when our fleet is returned, and Digby before Brest. However, with all my valour, I could not help

going to your brother to ask a few questions; but he had heard of no such letter. The French would be foolish, indeed, if they ran their heads a third time against your rocks, when watched by the most vigilant of all governors.

Your nephew George[1] is arrived with the fleet: my door opened t'other morning; I looked towards the common horizon of heads, but was a foot and a half below any face. The handsomest giant in the world made but one step 'cross my room, and seizing my hand, gave it such a robust gripe that I squalled; for he crushed my poor chalk-stones to powder. When I had recovered from the pain of his friendly salute, I said, 'It must be George Conway! and yet, is it possible? Why, it is not fifteen months ago since you was but six feet high!' In a word, he is within an inch of Robert and Edward[2], with larger limbs; almost as handsome as Hugh[3], with all the bloom of youth; and, in short, another of those comely sons of Anak, the breed of which your brother and Lady Hertford have piously restored for the comfort of the daughters of Sion. He is delighted with having tapped his warfare with the siege of Gibraltar, and burns to stride to America. The town, he says, is totally destroyed, and between two and three hundred persons were killed. Well, it is pity Lady Hertford has done breeding: we shall want such a race to repeople even the ruins we do not lose! The rising generation does give one some hopes. I confine myself to some of this year's birds. The young William Pitt has again displayed paternal

LETTER 2182.—[1] Hon. George Conway (b. 1763), afterwards Lord George Seymour, seventh son and thirteenth child of first Earl (afterwards Marquis) of Hertford, the first cousin of Horace Walpole.

[2] Hon. and Rev. Edward Conway (1757–1785), third son of the Earl of Hertford; Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, and Rector of Sudborne, Suffolk.

[3] Captain Hon. Hugh Conway (1759–1801), afterwards known as Vice-Admiral Lord Hugh Seymour; fifth son of the Earl of Hertford. He entered the navy in 1770, and was Lord of the Admiralty, 1795–98. In 1785 he married Lady Horatia Waldegrave (who appears to the right of the spectator in Reynolds' picture of the Ladies Waldegrave), great-niece of Horace Walpole.

oratory. The other day, on the Commission of Accounts, he answered Lord North, and tore him limb from limb. If Charles Fox could feel, one should think such a rival, with an unspotted character, would rouse him. What if a Pitt and Fox should again be rivals! A still newer orator has appeared in the India business, a Mr. Bankes[4], and against Lord North too; and with a merit that the very last crop of orators left out of their rubric—modesty. As young Pitt is modest too, one would hope some genuine English may revive!

Tuesday, June 5.

This is the season of opening my cake house. I have chosen a bad spot, if I meant to retire; and calculated ill, when I made it a puppet-show. Last week we had two or three mastiff-days; for they were fiercer than our common dog-days. It is cooled again; but rain is as great a rarity as in Egypt; and Father Thames is so far from being a Nile, that he is dying for thirst himself. But it would be prudent to reserve paragraphs of weather till people are gone out of town, for then I can have little to send you else from hence.

Berkeley Square, June 6.

As soon as I came to town to-day Le Texier called on me, and told me he has miscarried of *Pygmalion*. The expense would have mounted to 150*l.*, and he could get but sixty subscribers at a guinea apiece. I am glad his experience and success have taught him thrift. I did not expect it. Sheridan had a heavier miscarriage last night. The two Vestris had imagined a *fête*, and, concluding that whatever they designed would captivate the town and its purses, were at the expense of 1,200*l.*, and, distributing tickets at two guineas apiece, disposed of not two hundred. It ended in a bad Opera, that began three hours later than usual, and at

[4] Henry Bankes (1757–1834), M.P. for Corfe Castle.

quadruple the price. There were bushels of dead flowers, lamps, country-dances—and a cold supper. Yet they are not abused as poor Le Texier was last year.

June 8.

I conclude my letter, and I hope our present correspondence, very agreeably; for your brother told me last night that you have written to Lord Hillsborough for leave to return. If all our governors could leave their dominions in as good plight, it were lucky. Your brother owned, what the *Gazette* with all its circumstances cannot conceal, that Lord Cornwallis's triumphs have but increased our losses, without leaving any hopes. I am told that his army, which when he parted from Clinton amounted to seventeen thousand men, does not now contain above as many hundred, except the detachments. The *Gazette*, to my sorrow and your greater sorrow, speaks of Colonel O'Hara[5] having received two dangerous wounds. Princess Amelia was at Marlborough House last night, and played at faro till twelve o'clock. There ends the winter campaign! I go to Strawberry Hill to-morrow; and I hope, *à l'irlandaise*, that the next letter I write to you—will be not to write to you any more.

2183. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, June 8, 1781.

I FEAR, my dear Sir, I am going to tire you with a long detail, but I will make it as short as I can.

Some time ago Lucas came to me and asked if I had seen Mr. Morrice, who was commissioned by Cav. Mozzi, and wanted to talk to me on his affair with Lord Orford. I replied I had not seen Mr. M. nor should talk to him on that subject, unless my Lord should desire me, as I did not meddle with his Lordship's business. Lucas said Mr. Sharpe

[5] Now General O'Hara, Governor of Gibraltar. *Walpole.*

thought my Lady O. had done very wrong, and ought to have left her son what she had in England, and that (as it was about 10,000*l.*) Cav. Mozzi should divide it with my Lord. I said, whatever Mr. Sharpe might *think*, I did not see what he had to do to make a will for anybody; that Lady O. had a right to do as she pleased with her own, and that to propose such a division, unless my Lord had any right, would be a cheat. In short, I bade Lucas write to my Lord, and say that if it was his Lordship's desire, I was ready to settle the affair with Mr. Morrice, provided I were allowed to act handsomely and like a gentleman, and not like a lawyer.—No answer did I expect to this offer—however, Lucas has been with me to-day with my Lord's request to undertake the business with Mr. Morrice; and his Lordship, lest we should not agree, wishes to add Mr. Skrine, as an acquaintance of the Chevalier. I must do Sharpe the justice to say that he objected to Mr. Skrine, as one too much under obligations to my Lord—but I think Cav. Mozzi may allow it, for as I told Lucas, though I can have no partiality for Mozzi, *I* shall be counsel for him, as I cannot bear his being oppressed.

I am to desire you to tell him, that I beg he will send me as soon as he can an account of any demands Lady Orford might have on her son. If they are just, full allowance shall be made for them. Lord Orford's claims on his mother are for plate, jewels, &c., that she carried away without right. I have told my Lord that *they* shall be examined too, and not allowed unless just. One circumstance made me smile inwardly: Lucas said my Lord must assert his right, in justice to his father's creditors—you have heard by my Lord's answer to your nephew, how much he is influenced by *that* spirit of justice.

This is the sketch of the present aspect of the affair, which you will explain to Mozzi; and you may venture to

assure him that *I* shall be no enemy of his. It was my wish that my Lord should have made no claim on him; it is below him, considering the great estate he gets by his mother's death. As far as I can learn, my Lord's demand will be about 4 or 5,000*l.* If Mozzi can make any justifiable claim, I shall hope to reduce it to three thousand; but there is no judging before one sees the claims, and what foundations there are for them. The Chevalier at least will not suffer by his interest being in our hands, rather than in those of Sharpe and my Lord's attorneys—I have no bright opinion of the one or the others.

The late *Gazette*, boiled down from Lord Cornwallis's relation, will still convince you how transient our prospects are from his Lordship's successes. In truth, as we draw prospects from the faintest hints, no wonder they have no lasting body of colours. We expect something from Necker's fall—no ill compliment to him. I am amazed how he could hope, or at least expect, to stand. A general reformer, a Protestant, and a man of no birth, was an outrage to all interests and all prejudices. Sully, with some less objections, could not have stemmed the same torrent without a Henri Quatre to descry his merit and support it.

I have not time to say more at present, nor any events to tell you. I was forced to write this to-day not to lose any time. I go out of town to-morrow to reside at Strawberry, and shall call on Mr. Morrice the next day, who is in my neighbourhood. This business will bring me sometimes to town, or I should come seldom. The Parliament will sit to the middle of next month on India affairs, but I trouble myself with neither.

2184. To Charles Bedford.

Strawberry Hill, June 12, 1781.

I think, dear Sir, you are so good as to pay my coach-tax. I must beg the same favour of you for that on servants, which I believe is due very soon, with a heavy penalty if not paid within a limited time. My number is five, a *valet de chambre*, two footmen, a coachman and gardener. I have another, but in a capacity which nobody else has, and therefore, I conclude, not included—certainly not specified in the Act; it is my printer.

Yours sincerely,

Hor. Walpole.

2185. To the Earl of Strafford.

Strawberry Hill, June 13, 1781.

It was very kind, my dear Lord, to recollect me so soon: I wish I could return it by amusing you; but here I know nothing, and suppose it is owing to age that even in town I do not find the transactions of the world very entertaining. One must sit up all night to see or hear anything; and if the town intends to do anything, they never begin to do it till next day. Mr. Conway will certainly be here the end of this month, having thoroughly secured his island from surprise, and it is not liable to be taken any other way. I wish he was governor of this bigger one too, which does not seem quite so well guaranteed.

Your Lordship will wonder at a visit I had yesterday: it was from Mr. Storer, who has passed a day and night here. It was not from my being a fellow-scholar of Vestris, but from his being turned antiquary; the last passion I should have thought a Macaroni would have taken. I am as proud

of such a disciple as of having converted Dicky Bateman from a Chinese to a Goth. Though he was the founder of the Sharawadgi taste in England, I preached so effectually that his every pagoda took the veil. The Methodists say one must have been very wicked before one can be of the elect—yet is that extreme more distant from the *ton*, which avows knowing and liking nothing but the fashion of the instant, to studying what were the modes of five hundred years ago? I hope this conversion will not ruin Mr. Storer's fortune under the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland[1]. How his Irish Majesty will be shocked when he asks how large Prince Boothby's shoe-buckles are grown, to be answered he does not know, but that Charles Brandon's[2] cod-piece at the last Birthday had three yards of velvet in it! and that the Duchess of Buckingham[2] thrust out her chin two inches farther than ever in admiration of it! and that the Marchioness of Dorset[2] had put out her jaw by endeavouring to imitate her!

We have at last had some rains, which I hope extended to Yorkshire, and that your Lordship has found Wentworth Castle in the bloom of verdure. I always, as in duty bound, wish prosperity to everybody and everything there, and am your Lordship's ever devoted and grateful humble servant, HOR. WALPOLE.

2186. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, June 13, 1781.

THE beauty room, Madam, is the yellow bedchamber hung with Jervas's small copies of Sir Peter Lely's beauties, which chamber is on the ground-floor here, next to the

LETTER 2185.—[1] The Earl of Carlisle, Storer's intimate friend.

[2] Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, Eleanor Percy, Duchess of Buckingham, and Katharine Fitzalan, first wife of Henry Grey, Marquis of Dorset, all prominent at the court of Henry VIII.

little parlour. I placed your screen there *pour cause*, and because it accords with the chimney-piece, which is black and yellow. Had it inhabited the blue room, in which I chiefly live, it would not have lasted even *my time*. In Berkeley Square it would have looked as if in disgrace and in exile; just as French ministers, when under a cloud, feel miserable, though suffered to dwell in Paris itself, if not permitted into the heaven of heavens Versailles.

Mr. Storer has just left me: I have showed him such hosts of portraits of the dead, that if he retains their names, he would make a good Vice-Chamberlain to Proserpine on a *birth-night*, if there was any such *fête* in the shades below; but as ceremonies are of the essence of all courts, I suppose there they keep death-nights, and then he will be more at home in a ball-room than even Lord Brudenel.

I direct this to Grosvenor Place, for though you named to-day for your leaving town, nobody sets out at the time they intended. I shall be obliged to go thither oftener than I wish. When your Ladyship found me at the Grove[1], it was to inform Mr. Morrice that Lord Orford has named me and Mr. Skrine to be referees with him to compromise my Lord's claims on Cav. Mozzi for money due from my Lord's mother. I do not admire the pursuit of that claim, and tried to avoid being employed in it; but, though cast off when I am of no use, they come to me when any drudgery is to be done.

I have been reading a book as heterogeneous from my pursuits as Mr. Storer's new profession from his—Mr. Beckford's[2] on hunting; and as I always reckon that any book pays me in which I find *one* passage that pleases me or tells me something new (I mean that I care to learn, for as to novelty, every book of science could tell me what I don't

LETTER 2186.—[1] Mr. Morice's seat at Chiswick.

[2] Peter Beckford (1740–1811), author of *Thoughts on Hunting* and *Essays on Hunting*. Horace Walpole refers to the latter book.

know), I found one jewel in Mr. Beckford's, for which I would have perused a folio. His huntsman christened one of his hounds *Lyman*. 'Lyman!' said the squire; 'why, James, what does *Lyman* mean?' 'Lord, Sir,' said James, 'what does *anything* mean?' I am transported with James's good sense and philosophy. It comforts me for all the books of science which I do not understand, and is an answer to all the pretended knowledge upon earth; and if Mr. Beckford were a classic (as he will be one to those *who know of none*), I would change my motto of *Fari quae sentiat* for *What does anything mean?* as more expressive of *quae sentio*. I have gone through Sir R. Worsley's *Isle of Wight*, which is in my own way, and yet, alas! I did not find *one* diamond in that dunghill—no, James for my money!

2187. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, June 14, 1781.

You may imagine perhaps that because I am within reach of the dust of Hyde Park, and of the dirt of Westminster, I might send you letters brimful of news every week. I scorn your supposes. I am as ignorant as truth itself of anything worth telling you; the newspapers, like scavengers, collect all the ordures of Parliament, and retail them to dung the country, and you may have them like other chapmen. What can I tell you? That Lord Cornwallis has conquered his troops out of shoes and provisions, and himself out of troops; or that the heroic Governor Johnstone was so enraged at Captain Sutton's cowardice that he waited three hours to let him recover his spirit, and so lost the French fleet[1]? Pray excuse my being the historian of such prowess; I should as soon admire Mr. Cumberland's

Letter 2187.—[1] On April 16, 1781, Johnstone, who was at anchor at Port Praya in Santiago, repulsed an attack made by the French, but was

successful negotiations in Spain, where he stayed begging peace till Gibraltar was battered to the ground. I hope he will write an ode himself on the treaty he did not make, and like Pindar fill it with the genealogy of the mule on which he ambled from the Prado to the Escurial, and when I am a mule I will read it.

I have been reading another courtier's book, Sir Richard Worsley's *History of the Isle of Wight*. It is dedicated to the King, and to himself too, for I see no reason for his writing it, but to call himself *right honourable*, and to celebrate his family, and indeed they have made a great figure there; one of them having been commissioned to search for Queen Elizabeth's hawks, which, however, it does not appear that he found, or I suppose he would have been made *right honourable* too.

I have been rather more entertained by an *Essay on Hunting* by a Mr. Beckford, who puts me in mind of the country squire who was hunting as the battle of Edge Hill was going to be fought; an instance of philosophic indifference in the height of a civil war, unparalleled till the present age. Pray do not imagine that I think *Anecdotes of Painting* a jot more patriotic than anecdotes on hunting: if Mr. Beckford is of my opinion, he holds it in vain to say a serious word to the present generation. I came hither on Saturday for the summer, and you will find me as idle and trifling as if the last *Gazette* had announced the victory of Ramilies; in short, an Englishman after Lord Mansfield's own heart, and insensible to my country's ruin. Adieu!

P.S. I direct this to Aston, though I am not sure but you may be *concioning ad Clerum* at York.

prevented from following them up by the delay required for the repair of Captain Sutton's ship, the *Isis*. Johnstone in consequence placed Sutton under arrest. Sutton subsequently brought a successful action for false imprisonment against Johnstone.

2188. To Charles Bedford.

Dear Sir, Strawberry Hill, June 18, 1781.

The names and employments of my servants are as follow: Philip Colomb, *valet de chambre*; David Monnerat and James Sibley, footmen; John Cowie, gardener; and John Jenkins, coachman. You will be so good as to enter them at the Excise and pay for them now, and every year, and put them into your account.

I will send the account myself to Brentford.

Yours sincerely,
H. Walpole.

2189. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, June 20, 1781.

I shall not be able to wait on your Ladyship yet, for my niece Lady Maria, who has had a bad cold that has turned to a cough, is coming to me for the air. I expect Mr. Mason, too, who has long promised me a visit. If unengaged, I should be very glad to meet the company you propose to me; not that I want additional allurements to Ampthill.

It is not common for me, Madam, to send you news from court, or to contradict what is said to be transacting there; but for once I will be important—only because I have nothing more insignificant to tell you. Be assured, therefore, that the Emperor is not going to marry the Princess Royal[1]. I have been at the Pavilions this evening with the Duke and Duchess: his Royal Highness is already returned from his extempore jaunt to Brussels, and has *not* settled the

Letter 2189.—[1] Charlotte Augusta Matilda, eldest daughter of George III; m. (1797) the Hereditary Prince (afterwards King) of Würtemberg; d. 1825.

marriage articles. If his Highness has retained Cæsar in our pay, like his ancestor Maximilian [2], it is more than I am at liberty to disclose. I dare go no further than to advise you not to buy into the stocks upon that presumption. Mr. Wraxall may be more explicit, even in the House of Commons, though he knows no more of it than I do. However, I should not like to be thought totally ignorant, as I observed the depth of politics in the present times is to seem to know the contrary of all that is true—yet why should I affect more honours than I enjoy? Do not they seek me in my humble cell? Do not I want all my philosophy to combat the fumes of pride?—In a word, Princess Sophia has invited Tonton to the Pavilions; and will it be believed, I have consented to carry him? How weak is mortal man! That *I* should live to let my dog be a courtier! I do not know how others feel on such occasions, but for my part I cannot act this renegade part with *an unembarrassed countenance* [3]. I tremble lest Mr. Fox should write a note [4] to record my fall in my *Royal and Noble Authors*, where my Whiggism is the most apparent. My father is reported to have said that every man has his

[2] The Emperor Maximilian I (1493–1519) served under Henry VIII at the siege of Térouanne (1515), and received pay from him.

[3] An allusion to the political ballad of that name, published in 1746. See letter to Montagu of June 12, 1746.

[4] In his *Last Journals* (vol. ii. p. 464), under date of June 28, 1781, Horace Walpole wrote: 'Last week was sold by auction the very valuable library of an honourable representative* of Westminster, and which had been taken, with all his effects, in execution. Amongst the books there was Mr. Gibbon's first volume of the Roman History, and which appeared by the title-page to have been given by the author to his honourable friend, who thought proper to subscribe the following anecdote:—"The author at Brookes' said, there was no salvation for this country until six heads of the principal persons in administration were laid on the table. Eleven days after this same gentleman accepted a place of Lord of Trade under those very ministers, and has acted with them ever since." Such was the avidity of bidders for the smallest production of so wonderful a genius, that by the addition of this little record the book sold for three guineas.'

* Charles Fox.

price. You see, Madam, my dog was *my* vulnerable part. I have resisted bribes for myself—I was not proof against honours for Tonton. Do not give me quite up, dear Lady. Make it your own case; if Prince Octavius was to offer Lady Gertrude his hand and his rattle, could you find in your heart to refuse your consent? I will quit this tender subject, and tell you an anecdote, that you will have as much difficulty to believe as if it was in the *Gazette*.

A few evenings ago I was invited by the old Lady Fitzwilliam at Richmond to see some pictures and Japan that were her father's, Sir Matthew Decker. I asked her if she had ever happened to hear a ridiculous story that I had been told in my youth, and which I concluded had only been a joke. It was, that Sir John Germaine, Lady Betty's husband, had been so exceedingly ignorant, that he believed his countryman Sir Matthew (they were both Dutch) was author of St. Matthew's Gospel. She replied directly, 'It is so true, that Sir John had thence conceived such a reverence for my father's piety, that he left him 200*l.* to be distributed amongst poor Dutch.' Now, Madam, what story is improbable after this? Nor is it possible to add anything after it.

2190. To the Earl of Charlemont.

Strawberry Hill, July 1, 1781.

I have been exceedingly flattered, my Lord, by receiving a present from your Lordship, which at once proves that I retain a place in your Lordship's memory, and you think me worthy of reading what you like. I could not wait to give your Lordship a thousand thanks for so kind a mark of your esteem till I had gone through the volume, which I may venture to say I shall admire, as I find it contains some pieces which I had seen, and did admire, without

knowing their author. That approbation was quite impartial. Perhaps my future judgement of the rest will be not a little prejudiced, and yet on good foundation; for if Mr. Preston[1] has retained my suffrage in his favour by dedicating his poems to your Lordship, it must at least be allowed that I am biased by evidence of his taste. He would not possess the honour of your friendship unless he deserved it; and, as he knows you, he would not have ventured to prefix your name, my Lord, to poems that did not deserve your patronage. I dare to say they will meet the approbation of better judges than I can pretend to be. I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect, esteem, and gratitude.

2191. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, July 3, 1781.

It would be very dissonant, from my impatience to see you, if I had suffered anything to interfere with my readiness to receive you the moment you are ready to come to me. You will find me alone from this instant to your arrival, and for as long afterwards as you will stay with me;—yes, quite alone, unless you persuade Mr. Stonhewer to accompany you, which would make me still happier.

I have found your emendations of *The Mysterious Mother*; but as to inserting them in the text, it is now impossible, for the whole impression was printed off in a week after it was delivered to Dodsley, as I then thought I should scarce be able to get the start of the spurious edition. Luckily my advertisement stopped that; which shows it was an

Letter 2190.—[1] William Preston (1753–1807), miscellaneous writer. He was a native of Dublin, and was the first secretary of the Irish Academy on its foundation in 1786.

Letter 2191.—Incomplete in C.; the omitted portion restored from Mitford's note-book in British Museum.

interested job, and perhaps I may be able to avoid publishing at all: if I must, I shall certainly beg your leave to add your emendations. I told you at first most sincerely, that I think they are as full proof of your genius as you ever gave; and I shall not selfishly stifle them to avoid severity to myself. My play has been already so public, that I can never totally suppress it: it is said to be printing in Ireland: nay, I think it will be more to my honour to adopt your corrections than not, as to own one's errors is some merit;—but enough of this.

I wrote my letter last night, and had sealed it; but open it again to tell you, that if you should be arrived by Friday, and ready to come to me, you would find some company that day who propose to dine with me, of which I received notice this morning. I give you this notice that you might not think I deceived you. Do send me a line beforehand when I shall see you, that I may not even be engaged to dine out.

Your metropolitan is an impudent blackguard, but I would not have his punishment merely temporary. I had rather you would set him in a kennel of your rhyming for him, than have him sit in the pillory at York, where his infamy will be more transient than even at Fleet Ditch. Your abuse will outlive not only the present incorrigible time, but even the tyranny that is meant to be entailed on us. Lucan, far your inferior, outlived the whole succession of Roman Emperors, and will survive the Popes too, and then my Lord of York will flutter on his gibbet in chains, as well as Julius Cæsar, while Yorkshire remonstrances will have no more readers than my Lord Clarendon's long-winded memorials, which even Dr. Bagot, and Lord Bagot, and Bishop Butler and Sir Roger Newdigate skip or doze over. Good night!—Come.

2192. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, July 4, 1781.

I every day grow too wary, Madam, to dip myself in promises of visits at the least distance of place or time; and expect to make few more, so little I can depend on my health, though for the last six months it has been very flourishing; but at present it has pulled me by the sleeve, or rather by the knee, where I have got the rheumatism, by putting on thinner stockings on sultry Saturday, and sauntering in the dew till between nine and ten. I thought it would have obliged me to receive on my couch a stately visit yesterday from the upright Dowager of Beaufort and Lady Betty Compton, who breakfasted with me; and, as everybody is a candidate for the latter's hand, it would have been mortifying to be lame when I had so fair an opportunity of entering the lists. However, I made shift to go through every room of the house, and should not have despaired, if, unluckily, Lady Hertford had not proposed to go to the chapel in the garden, which reduced me to use my stick, and I doubt left the prize still to be contended for by Lord George Cavendish[1], Lord Fairford[2], and my great-nephew Cholmondeley, who, I hear, t'other day forgot himself, and squeezed the mother's hand instead of the daughter's. Oh, what consequences might have ensued, had such a fit of absence seized him with another Duchess Dowager of *B.*[3]!

Letter 2192.—[1] Lord George Augustus Henry Cavendish (1754–1834), afterwards Earl of Burlington; third son of fourth Duke of Devonshire. He married Lady Betty Compton in 1782.

[2] Arthur Hill (1753–1801), Viscount Fairford, eldest son of first Earl of Hillsborough (afterwards Marquis of Downshire), whom he succeeded in 1793.

[3] The Dowager Duchess of Bedford. Gibbon writes thus to his stepmother on July 3, 1775:—'You know I am not a writer of news, but I cannot forbear telling you that the Dutchess of Bedford made regular proposals of marriage to the young

My niece[4] left me last night, quite recovered. Her sisters fetched her away; Captain Waldegrave came to us the evening before, and returned with them. He is fallen away, and shows how hard his service has been. In short, all one sees and hears from the return is a tale of distresses beyond belief! T'other day I was told of a letter from an officer in the *victorious* army of the conqueror Cornwallis, which said, 'I expect to date my next from the prison at Boston!'

Did your Ladyship hear of a Prince Sulkowski, who was lately in England? He was competitor with the present King for the crown of Poland, is hideous, and covered with brilliants. George Selwyn said he had never before seen a monster set in diamonds. This opulent Palatine came, about a fortnight ago, with his *reine manquée*, to see Strawberry, and was admitted without a ticket, as all foreigners are. I was not here; he left a card with all his titles, as Prince of Thiski, Duke of Thatski, &c., to thank me in the name of all Europe for the free ingress of strangers. It seems the part of his revenues in specie (for it would be cumbersome to give a handful of peasants to every housekeeper) is rigidly economic (unless you reckon the list of titles on his cards). On Margaret he bestowed four and sixpence, having appropriated but five shillings to this visit, of which, prudently reflecting that he might be overturned, or lose a wheel, he retained one sixpence; however, being asked, like the Duchess of Beaufort, to visit the chapel, he surmounted his sage reserve, and generously conferred that sixpence on the gardener!

> The crown of Poland, venal twice an age,
> To just three millions stinted modest Gage.

Earl of Cholmondeley, and was as regularly refused. Poor as he was (he replied to Mr. Fitzpatrick the Embassador) he was not quite poor enough to accept them.' (*Letters*, ed. Prothero, 1896, vol. i. p. 262.)

[4] Lady Maria Waldegrave.

I suppose it is cheaper since the partition.

I do not in the least know who Perlin[5] was that wrote travels, of which it is necessary to unriddle the names. Pray tell me who he was, and as I suppose he lived ages ago, what he expended on *concierges*. Lord Ossory shall certainly have Hentzner[6], and as soon as he pleases, if your Ladyship will tell me how to send him.

Do not be afraid, you shall not be plagued with Tonton, though I assure you he has a very decent privy purse for his travels; but I recollect that my uncle Horace used to say that Mademoiselle Furniture does not love dogs; which makes me allow Tonton handsomely, that he may silence such tattling housekeepers as Margaret.

2193. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, July 5, 1781.

Your last is of the 26th of May, and mine of the 8th of June, in which I told you of the reference made to me, Mr. Skrine, and Mr. Morrice. The latter was with me this morning, and said Mr. Skrine had begged to be excused, but my Lord insisted, as he said Mr. Morrice and I were likely to differ. If so, it is not very handsome to cast a friend of his own into *his* scale—but he is mistaken; Mr. Morrice and I think alike about this affair. Since that, I have had no public news to tell you. *Gazettes* will, perhaps, have made you think that the Duke of Gloucester's visit to the Emperor was political. If it was, the business was dispatched in an instant, for no visit was ever shorter. Nothing has come to my knowledge *here* that looks towards peace; but indeed nothing does come to my knowledge,

[5] Probably Estienne Perlin, whose *Description des Royaulmes d'Angleterre et d'Escosse* (Paris, 1558) was edited in 1775 with notes by Richard Gough.

[6] Hentzner's *Journey in England*, printed at Strawberry Hill.

Frances Seymour Conway, Countess of Lincoln
from a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

nor do I inquire about anything else. The war is not even entertaining; nothing but miscarriages and drawn battles. I believe the expense of the sum total will be the only striking event.

You are, as usual, very kind about the Rolle estate[1]; but be assured I shall never concern myself about it. All my views for my family were cut up by the roots when the pictures were sold; nor would I, for the world, make interest to influence my Lord's will, even were I younger. You say he is kinder to me—yes, to serve himself. If my real services have had so little weight, I will not be obliged to him indirectly, nor will I stoop to court his rascally creatures. Oh, my dear Sir, I am sixty-four, and am infirm and breaking. I do not look beyond the life of a younger man, nor have a single view left; scarce a wish but to pass the short remainder in tranquillity, and, as much as I can, without pain, and with preservation of my senses.

You are quite mistaken about the descent of the barony of Clinton. Should my Lord leave every shilling to his father's relations, that peerage, coming by his mother, would go away. Another barony, that of Say and Sele, has just now been adjudged to a Mr. Twisleton[2], and occasioned examination into the honours that have been in the earldom of Lincoln. It struck me that the barony of Clinton, if Lord Orford dies without children, would revert to the present Duke of Newcastle, and thence to Lady Lincoln's only child, a daughter[3]. I mentioned this to her father,

Letter 2193.—[1] The estate of the Rolles was come to Lord Orford on his mother's death, and he had power to cut off the entail, and leave it to whom he pleased, as well as the Walpole estate. *Walpole.*

[2] Colonel Thomas Twistleton (d. 1788), of the 9th Foot.

[3] Lady Catherine Pelham-Clinton (d. 1804), only daughter of Henry Fiennes Pelham-Clinton, Earl of Lincoln, by Lady Frances Conway, daughter of the Earl of Hertford; m. (1800) William Pleydell-Bouverie, Viscount Folkestone, afterwards Earl of Radnor.

Lord Hertford; he has had the pedigree sifted, and it comes out that I was in the right, though it had occurred to nobody else; so I have at least contributed to give a peerage to one of my relations[4].

But I ought not to have wandered so far when I was thanking you for a friendly hint; but should have thanked you for a positive present. You told me, months ago, that you had sent me a lump of crystal before my last positive prohibition. That lump I have just received, and what you spoke of so irreverently proves a beautiful sculptured vase of rock crystal. There is no end of your gifts; but there must be. Remember, reflect, how little time I may have to enjoy them: they will only figure in my inventory at my death.

The Duchess Dowager of Beaufort breakfasted here the other day, and, after inquiring about you most particularly, told me the transport you expressed on attaining the silver chest of Benvenuto Cellini for me. Oh, how sad is the thought that you are *never* to see your presents arranged and displayed *here*, with all the little honour I can confer on them; but they are all recorded in my Catalogue, and whoever reads it will think I had no shame or gratitude. To put a stop to your magnificence, I must be brutal, and treat you as Lord Hunsdon did Queen Elizabeth, when she laid the robes of an earl on his death-bed. I must finish, for I am at this instant in pain with the rheumatism, and going to bed. I wish us both a good night.

[4] On the death of Lord Orford in 1791 without children the barony of Clinton was claimed by Robert George William Trefusis as sole heir of Theophilus Clinton, fourth Earl of Lincoln and twelfth Baron Clinton. His claim was allowed, and he was summoned to the House of Lords in 1794.

2194. To John Nichols.

Strawberry Hill, July 6, 1781.

Mr. H. Walpole desires Mr. Nichols to accept his grateful thanks for the obliging present of Hogarth's *Tour*.

2195. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, July 7, 1781.

You must be, or will be, tired of my letters, Madam; every one is a contradiction to the last; there is alternately a layer of complaints, and a layer of foolish spirits. To-day the wind is again in the dolorous corner. For these four days I have been confined with a pain and swelling in my face. The apothecary says it is owing to the long drought; but as I should not eat grass were there ever such plenty, and as my cows, though starving, have no swelled cheeks, I do not believe him. I humbly attribute my frequent disorders to my longevity, and to that Proteus the gout, who is not the less himself for being incog. Excuses I have worn out, and, therefore, will not make any for not obeying your kind invitation again to Ampthill. I can only say, I go nowhere, even where Tonton is invited—except to balls—and yet, though I am the last Vestris that has appeared, Mrs. Hobart did not invite me to her *Sans Souci* last week, though she had all my other juvenile contemporaries, Lady Berkeley, Lady Fitzroy, Lady Margaret Compton, and Mrs. French, &c. Perhaps you do not know that the lady of the *fête*, having made as many conquests as the King of Prussia, has borrowed the name of that hero's

Letter 2194.—Not in C.; reprinted from Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. viii. p. 436.

villa for her hut on Ham Common, where she has built two large rooms of timber under a cabbage. Her field-officers, General French, General Compton, &c., were sweltered in the ball-room, and then frozen at supper in tents on the grass. She herself, as intrepid as King Frederic, led the ball, though dying of the toothache, which she had endeavoured to drown in laudanum; but she has kept her bed ever since the campaign ended.

This is all I know in the world, for the war seems to have taken laudanum too, and to keep its bed.

I have received a letter to-day from Sir Horace Mann, who tells me the Great Duke has been making *wondrous improvements* at Florence. He has made a passage through the Tribune, and built a brave new French room of stucco in white and gold, and placed the Niobe in it; but as everybody is tired of her telling her old story, she and all the Master and Miss Niobes are orderly disposed round the chamber, and if anybody asks who they are, I suppose they answer, Francis Charles Ferdinand Ignatius Neopomucenus, or Maria Theresa Christina Beatrice, &c. Well, Madam, have I any cause to sigh that the pictures at Houghton are transported to the North Pole, if the Tribune at Florence is demolished by Vandals, and Niobe and her progeny dance a *cotillon*? O sublunary grandeur, short-lived as a butterfly! We smile at a clown who graves the initials of his name or the shape of his shoe on the leads of a church, in hopes of being remembered, and yet he is as much known as King I don't know whom, who built the Pyramids to eternize his memory. Methinks Anacreon was the only sensible philosopher. If I loved wine, and should look well in a chaplet of roses, I would crown myself with flowers, and go drunk to bed every night *sans souci*.

2196. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, July 13, 1781.

I came to town yesterday to meet Lucas. It seems Cav. Mozzi, by a letter to Mr. Sharpe, rejects Mr. Skrine. It is true, prudently, in one light, as Mr. Skrine would naturally be partial to Lord O.—yet being so, it would have given me a better handle for being a mediator. Now I stand as solely advocate for my nephew—yet I will be as equitable as my duty will allow—or command. By what I can find, my Lord's demands will amount to 4 or 5,000*l.* I should wish the Chevalier may be able to produce claims to justify striking off half, or at least near half—but if his are not well founded, it will not be right to favour him. Lucas will not be ready to give me in the list of my Lord's demands these ten days—and then I must examine them attentively; and being little versed in such matters, and a very bad man of business, the Chevalier must not be impatient, for I cannot act superficially when I am to decide on property, and must weigh all my doubts. It is an uneasy duty to me; but having insisted on liberty of acting generously, I do think I have a right to be as propitious to the Chevalier as equity will allow.

Mr. Sharpe, I believe, by to-night's post will send you an instrument which he desired I would recommend to you. You will consider it well, no doubt, first—but *then* I think may do what is desired. That I might not contribute through ignorance to any *legal supercherie*, I insisted on writing down before Lucas the very words I would use to you, and made him read them, and tell me if they were precisely what he desired and *meant*. Here they are, with a scratch under every line.

Letter 2196.—Not in C.; now first printed from transcript in possession of Earl Waldegrave.

Mr. Sharpe proposes to send to Sir Horace Mann and his secretary (the latter as witness) *a requisition to them to administer the printed oath* (which Mr. Sharpe will send) *to the Chev. Mozzi. Which done, Sir H. Mann is to desire the Chevalier to send the printed instrument back, and the original will, or an attested copy, that the will may be proved here* (in England) *when the affair between my Lord and the Chevalier shall be comprised. The sending the will is to save time, because my Lord cannot withdraw his caveat, unless the affair is compromised. I am to desire you to act in it, which cannot prejudice the Chevalier, as the will cannot be proved unless the affair is compromised.*

The words in parentheses not underlined, are only my own explanations and are not in the paper I showed to Lucas.

This is all that is necessary at present on this business; nor have I time for more. Positive news I know none. The town says Lord Mulgrave is returned from a design against Flushing, which failed, as his pilots were too ignorant. I hear too that an account came to-day of the junction of Lord Cornwallis and Arnold in Virginia, which will revive our hopes—to be again disappointed! The Parliament will adjourn next week.

This was an *hors-d'œuvre*, and you must excuse my brevity.

2197. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, July 17, 1781.

I did not mean, Madam, that I should be confined *to London* till Lord Orford's business is settled; if I did say so, I expressed myself ill, as I wrote in a great hurry. On the contrary, as Mr. Morrice is so much nearer to me, I believe our meetings will be at the Grove, unless when necessary to go to town to see the lawyers, who have not yet given in

the respective claims for which we are waiting. Cavalier Mozzi has complained so much of delays, that I did not care to be out of the way, and have any imputed to me. Indeed, at present, it is impossible for me to stir; Lady Aylesbury comes to me to-morrow, and I am still so lame with my rheumatism, that it is near three weeks that I have not been round my own garden.

Your Ladyship and Lord Ossory are very kind to think on me, but I am grown such old lumber, as to be fit for nothing but a garret. Were I as young as my brother, who is eleven years older, I might be amusing. I sat in admiration of his spirits and humour for two hours the other night, when I was scarce able to open my lips. He described having been to see his new house at Isleworth, after not having been out of his own doors since April twelvemonth. He said he was so surprised himself, that he could not believe he was there, and asked who *that* was, and that they assured him it was he himself. For my part, I shall sooner take myself for nobody, than for anybody else: perhaps when I am a ghost, I shall take myself for something, and *walk* at Ampthill, and even Lady Gertrude will not be frightened, as I shall be very little less than I am.

2198. To John Henderson.

Strawberry Hill, July 18, 1781.

I wrote a week ago to Mr. Harris[1] with the offer of Mr. Jephson's play, but have received no answer at all. I conclude Mr. Harris is in the country, as at least he would have been so civil as to say No. Will you be so good as to tell me by a line whether I guess rightly? or if you have heard anything about it? I know Mr. Jephson

Letter 2198.—[1] Thomas Harris, manager of Covent Garden Theatre; d. 1820.

will be impatient, and when I have done a disagreeable thing merely to oblige him, I should be sorry to have him think I had neglected it. I beg your pardon for all the trouble I have given and give you, and am, Sir,

Your obliged humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2199. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, July 25, 1781.

POOR human nature, what a contradiction it is! to-day it is all rheumatism and morality, and sits with a death's head before it: to-morrow it is dancing!—Oh, my Lady, my Lady, what will you say, when the next thing you hear of me after my last letter is, that I have danced three country-dances with a whole set, forty years younger than myself! Shall not you think I have been chopped to shreds and boiled in Medea's kettle? Shall not you expect to see a print of Vestris teaching me?—and Lord Brudenell dying with envy? You may stare with all your expressive eyes, yet the fact is true. Danced—I do not absolutely say, *danced*—but I swam down three dances very gracefully, with the air that was so much in fashion after the battle of Oudenarde, and that was still taught when I was fifteen, and that I remember General Churchill practising before a glass in a gouty shoe.

To be sure you die with impatience to know the particulars. You must know then—for all my revels must out—I not only went five miles to Lady Aylesford's ball last Friday, but my nieces the Waldegraves desired me there to let them come to me for a few days, as they had been disappointed about a visit they were to make at another place; but that is neither here nor there. Well, here they are, and last night we went to Lady Hertford at Ditton. Soon

after, Lady North and her daughters arrived, and besides Lady Elizabeth and Lady Bel Conways, there were their brothers Hugh and George. All the *jeunesse* strolled about the garden. We ancients, with the Earl and Colonel Keene, retired from the dew into the drawing-room. Soon after, the two youths and seven nymphs came in, and shut the door of the hall. In a moment we heard a burst of laughter, and thought we distinguished something like the scraping of a fiddle. My curiosity was raised, I opened the door and found four couples and a half standing up, and a miserable violin from the ale-house. 'Oh,' said I, 'Lady Bel shall not want a partner;' I threw away my stick, and *me voilà dansant comme un charme!* At the end of the third dance, Lord North and his son[1], in boots, arrived. 'Come,' said I, 'my Lord, you may dance, if I have'—but it ended in my *resigning my place* to his son.

Lady North has invited us for to-morrow, and I shall reserve the rest of my letter for the second volume of my regeneration; however, I declare I will not *dance*. I will not make myself too cheap; I should have the Prince of Wales sending for me three or four times a week to hops in Eastcheap. As it is, I feel I shall have some difficulty to return to my old dowagers, at the Duchess of Montrose's, and shall be humming the Hempdressers[2] when they are scolding me for playing in flush.

Friday, the 27th.

I am not only a prophet, but have more command of my passions than such impetuous gentry as prophets are apt to have. We found the fiddles as I foretold; and yet I kept my resolution and did *not* dance, though the Sirens invited me, and though it would have shocked the dignity of old

Letter 2199.—[1] Hon. George Augustus North (1757–1802), succeeded his father as third Earl of Guilford in 1792.

[2] A dance, described, with the tune, in Mrs. Delany's *Correspondence*, 2nd series, vol. i. p. 169. See also *Journal of Lady Mary Coke*.

Tiffany Ellis, who would have thought it an indecorum. The two younger Norths[3] and Sir Ralph Payne supplied my place. I played at cribbage with the matrons, and we came away at midnight. So if I now and then do cut a colt's tooth, I have it drawn immediately. I do not know a paragraph of news—the nearer the minister, the farther from politics.

P.S. My next jubilee dancing shall be with Lady Gertrude.

2200. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, July 26, 1781.

I will not delay thanking you, dear Sir, for a second letter, which you wrote out of kindness, though I have time but to say a word, having my house full of company. I think I have somewhere or other mentioned the *Robertus Coementarius*[1] (probably on some former information from you, which you never forget to give me), at least the name sounds familiar to me—but just now I cannot consult my papers or books from the impediment of my guests. As I am actually preparing a new edition of my *Anecdotes*, I shall very soon have occasion to search.

I am sorry to hear you complain of the gout, but trust it will be a short parenthesis.

Yours most gratefully,

Hor. Walpole.

[3] Hon. Francis and Hon. Frederick North, successively Earls of Guilford.

Letter 2200.—[1] The architect of the abbey church of St. Albans.

2201. To the Hon. Thomas Walpole.

Berkeley Square, July 31, 1781.

I don't know when you will receive this letter, perhaps not under three weeks; but I could not let slip the opportunity of writing to you, dear Sir, by Dr. Gem, whom I still found here, and who hopes to set out at the end of this week. I have nothing to tell you, but that I am and always shall be affectionately yours and your son's—here my letter ought to end, and I hope it was not necessary even to say so much. But I own I am disappointed. I expected to see your son before now. Last night I came to town to see and wish joy to our again united families[1], which is great joy to me too. I asked Lord Walpole about you both, and he said you cannot part with your son, which in truth I do not wonder at. His virtues deserve all your affection. I do not desire either of you to write when it is inconvenient or disagreeable to you: but be assured that it will always give me pleasure to hear of you, and more to hear anything that is fortunate to you.

In politics, I know nothing new, nor inquire, nor—had almost said, care, which is natural when both belief and hope are tired out.

Of the Prince of Beauvau I find I am to hear no more. I should blush if I had executed my dear old friend's will no better than he has! Her poor little dog has all my care. I am happy the Prince did not want the copy of him, for then I should never have seen the original.

My nephew, who has more excuse, for at least *he* has been mad, is much such an executor, only a little more fairly as more openly, for he contests part of what his mother left to

Letter 2201.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 58-60.

[1] See the following letter.

her paramour[2], though he declared he would not. However, he offers to compromise, and has desired me to be a referee, and Mozzi has named Mr. Morrice for the other. I accepted on the express condition that I should be allowed to act as a gentleman, not as a lawyer. This office has brought to my sight a letter that he wrote to his mother on his first recovery, in which he states the great improvement of his and her estates, and attributes all to my care. This is a satisfaction I never expected to see under his hand. But I beg your pardon for troubling you with my personal concerns, and yet I have nothing better to send you, and therefore conclude

Yours most affectionately and sincerely,

H. Walpole.

2202. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Aug. 1, 1781.

I have within these three days received yours of the 14th of July, with the enclosed copies of letters to Lady Orford, which indeed give me double pleasure; first, to be sure, on my own account; it must be very satisfactory to possess such an attestation from my nephew himself of the service I rendered to him—though his conduct, even for his own sake, has so much contradicted his experience. If I, in so short a time as I was employed for him, raised his estates two thousand pounds a year (and I can show that had I continued six months longer in my office he would have been five thousand one hundred pounds a year richer than when he fell ill), he has not been very kind to himself in dismissing me; for one of the farms that I would have let for 1,000*l.* a year, I believe he now receives but 700*l.* from—but I will say no more on this head.

[2] The Cavaliere Mozzi.

My second satisfaction arises from Sharpe's opinion that the deficiencies on my Lady's jointure ought to be made good—I believe I shall surprise and dismay him when I produce that opinion, as I shall do at a proper moment. When Sharpe writes afterward that the jointured estates produced more than given for, it is no contradiction—he means to set the overplus of late years against the deficiencies of former years, in order to evade the Cavalier's claim—but I have something to say to that too. In short, I think Sharpe's conduct shameful. As trusted by Lady Orford and Mozzi, he ought to be advocate for the latter, but I believe is entirely his enemy—however, the Cavalier shall not suffer by that: and though I will pay all due weight to my Lord's just claims, I shall not be a jot influenced by Mr. Sharpe.

I have not yet heard a word from Lucas—therefore pray do not let Cav. Mozzi suspect any delay in me. Mr. Morrice and I are ready to enter on the business the moment I receive the schedule of my Lord's demands. I have been so peremptory in my declarations, that I believe my Lord's counsel are a little embarrassed what to produce, as they know I will proceed only on good grounds, being warranted by my Lord's first resolution of not contesting his mother's will, and by my own positive terms of being allowed to act handsomely for him.

Do not be surprised that, though I write so frequently, I tell you so little news: I know none but what you see in all the papers. Tobago is allowed to be taken by the French, and there is scarce more doubt of Pensacola being taken[1] by the Spaniards.

Lord Walpole's son was married last week to my niece, Sophia Churchill. It is more than your friend, Sir John Dick, is to his betrothed. He has acted very foolishly, both

LETTER 2202.—[1] Tobago was taken in June and Pensacola in May.

in engaging and disengaging himself. He sent his future bride an abrupt letter, to say he found himself too old and infirm to proceed. Did not he know three months ago that he was sixty-four? Some say, he discovered that Mademoiselle was not very fond of him: did he expect she would be? In short, it is unlucky to look well at three-score, for, in reality, nobody can fall in love with one at that age but oneself.

I have not received Galluzzi's History, nor heard a word of its arrival. I will not be impatient, lest, as I am on the brink of sixty-four too, I should find I have forgotten my Italian and cannot *enjoy* it.

2203. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, July 7, 1781.

My good Sir, you forget that I have a cousin, eldest son of Lord Walpole, and of a marriageable age, who has the same Christian name as I. The Miss Churchill he has married is my niece, second daughter of my sister Lady Mary Churchill, so that if I were in my dotage, I must have looked out for another bride—in short, I hope you will have no occasion to wish me joy of any egregious folly. I do congratulate you on your better health, and on the Duke of Rutland's civilities to you. I am a little surprised at his brother[1], who is a seaman, having a propensity to divinity, and wonder you object to it: the church navigant would be an extension of its power. As to *orthodoxy*, excuse me if I think it means nothing at all but every man's own opinion. Were every man to define his faith, I am persuaded that no

Letter 2203.—Dated by Walpole himself July 7, 1781, but obviously written in August. (See *Notes and Queries*, Nov. 8, 1900.)

[1] Captain Lord Robert Manners (1758–1782), second son of the Marquis of Granby. He died of injuries received in the battle of Dominica (April 12, 1782).

two men are or ever were exactly of the same opinion in *all* points; and as men are more angry at others for differing with them on a single point, than satisfied with their concurrence in all others, each would deem everybody else a heretic. Old or new opinions are exactly of the same authority, for every opinion must have been new when first started, and no man has nor ever had more right than another to dictate, unless inspired. St. Peter and St. Paul disagreed from the earliest time, and who can be sure which was in the right? and if one of the apostles was in the wrong, who may not be mistaken? When you will tell me which was the orthodox, and which the heterodox apostle, I will allow that you know what orthodoxy is. You and I are perhaps the two persons who agree the best with very different ways of thinking—and perhaps the reason is, that we have a mutual esteem for each other's sincerity, and, from an experience of more than forty years, are persuaded that neither of us has any interested views. For my own part, I confess honestly that I am far from having the same charity for those whom I suspect of mercenary views. If Dr. Butler, when a private clergyman, wrote Whig pamphlets, and when Bishop of Oxford preaches Tory sermons, I should not tell him that he does not know what orthodoxy is, but I am convinced that he does not care what it is. The Duke of Rutland seems much more liberal than Butler or I, when he is so civil to you, though you voted against his brother. I am not acquainted with his Grace, but I respect his behaviour: he is above prejudices.

The story of poor Mr. Cotton[2] is shocking, whatever way it happened, but most probably it was accident.

I am ashamed at the price of my books, though not my fault.—But I have so often been guilty myself of giving

[2] John, eldest son of Sir John Cotton, sixth Baronet, accidentally killed by the discharge of his own gun at his father's seat at Madingley in Cambridgeshire.

ridiculous prices for rarities, though of no intrinsic value, that I must not condemn the same folly in others. Everything tells me how silly I am!—I pretend to reason, and yet am a virtuoso!—Why should I presume that, at sixty-four, I am too wise to marry?—and was you, who know so many of my weaknesses, in the wrong to suspect me of one more?—Oh, no, my good friend; nor do I see anything in your belief of it, but the kindness with which you wish me felicity on the occasion. I heartily thank you for it, and am

Most cordially yours,

Hor. Walpole.

2204. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 16, 1781.

Don't you think in the case of correspondence that it is worse to adhere to the letter of a promise than to break it. You desired me to write to you, but you certainly did not wish I should, if I had nothing to say; yet I keep my word most conscientiously, lest you should think me negligent, though I have not a tittle to tell you. I have heard nothing public or private, but of the ball at Windsor on the Prince's birthday, and I trust you do not care a straw about that, any more than I do. The monarch and his son sail to the Nore to-day to see Parker's fleet, and I suppose that Parker's fleet may see them, and what then?—I protest my imagination cannot suggest a single reflection on such events; I might as well tell you what I had for dinner.

What indeed does the present vast scene speak, but that four or five great nations may be at immense expense and be a prodigious while doing nothing?—yes, and that one of those nations at least can amuse itself in the meantime with the details of a hop, and the circumstances of a scuffle. Don't tell me, the world is grown an old fool, and the

Memoirs of P. P.[1] will be as important as the history of the present age. If I did anything myself, I should think it as much worth sending you as the journal of Europe; but alas! like other sovereigns, and consequently like Harlequin when he sat on a throne and was asked, *Que fais-tu là, Harlequin?* I answer, *Mais je règne.* At most, by my *de par le Roi*, I have printed Mr. Jones's Ode[2], and have a painter making drawings for the description of my house and collection—and with my own royal hand I have been preparing a new edition of my *Painters*—

These are imperial works and worthy kings.

If you say no, tell me what they do better. Oh, but the Emperor?—why, he is running about and sowing sayings, that are to be cited by Diderot and D'Alembert. However, I am mistaken if he turns out anything but an ape of the King of Prussia.

I have received from Brighthelmstone a long card in verse, from Mr. Hayley to Mr. Gibbon, inviting Livy to dine with Virgil—but it is not worth sending you; nor do I know anything that is good: if you do, now, send it to me.

2205. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 23, 1781.

I RECEIVE your letters, and all you say of and from Cav. Mozzi, as I did his to Lord Orford, which, though with a flying seal, I have not opened; nay, nor delivered; for in the first place, I do not know where my Lord is; and in the next, I have been in weekly and daily expectation of summons from Lucas to meet Mr. Morrice, but to this hour

LETTER 2204.—[1] *Memoirs of P. P., Clerk of this Parish*, by Pope. They were probably intended as a skit on Burnet's *History of my own Time*. Pope, however, denied this in his preface to the *Dunciad*.

[2] Ode on Lord Althorp's marriage, by Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Jones.

have not heard a syllable from him: consequently am totally unable to inform Mozzi what my Lord's demands are. I conclude they are wading into the receipts of my Lady's jointure, to show how many years it was far from being deficient—but this is mere guess, for as I tell you, they are totally silent, as I must be till I hear from them.

Your last but one mentioned your head being disordered by the gout; but, as the last said nothing of it, I trust it was a very transient attack.

You have seen in the papers all that I could know of the sea-fight between Parker and the Dutch[1]. I believe neither side had cause of triumph: however, we boast of having driven back their trading-vessels. The King and Prince have been to thank the Admiral and fleet. The vast storm that hangs over Gibraltar does not seem to alarm us. Indeed, they[2], of whose judgement I have an opinion, do not believe it will be taken; however, I pity the brave men who are cooped up in it. I know nothing from any other quarter; but everything is a theme for moralizing, from Gibraltar to the Tribune[3] at Florence. If that inestimable chamber is not inviolate, what mortal structure is? Zoffany's picture, however, will rise in value, as a portrait of what that room *was*; yet its becoming more precious will not, I doubt, expedite the sale of it.

It is pity that they who love to display taste will not be content with showing their genius without making alterations, and then we should have more samples of the styles of different ages. Some monuments of our predecessors ought to be sacred. Sir William Stanhope was persuaded by Sir Thomas Robinson and Mr. Ellis (the present

LETTER 2205.—[1] On Aug. 5, on the Doggerbank. The action was hotly contested; both sides suffered heavy loss and parted without any definite result.

[2] General Conway. *Walpole.*

[3] The Great Duke had removed many of the curiosities, and practised another door in it, so that it was become a passage room. *Walpole.*

possessor) to *improve* Pope's garden here in my neighbourhood. The poet had valued himself on the disposition of it, and with reason. Though containing but five square acres, enclosed by three lanes, he had managed it with such art and deception, that it seemed a wood, and its boundaries were nowhere discoverable. It is true, it was closely planted, and consequently damp. Refined taste went to work: the vocal groves were thinned, modish shrubs replaced them, and light and three lanes broke in; and, if the Muses wanted to tie up their garters, there is not a nook to do it without being seen. Poor Niobe's children [4], who now stand in a row, as if saying their catechism, will know how to pity them! I remember a story of old Thomas, Earl of Pembroke: he one day took it into his grave head to give eyeballs with charcoal to all his statues at Wilton, and then called his wife and daughters to see how much livelier the gods, goddesses, and emperors were grown! Lively, indeed! for Mr. Arundel, his son-in-law, had improved on his Lordship's idea, and with the same charcoal had distributed whole thickets of black hair to the middles of the whole marble assembly. As Niobe and the Misses Niobe are in a French room, they may come off for a quantity of rouge.

2206. To John Henderson.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 26, 1781.

I have received a letter, Sir, from Mr. Jephson to Mr. Harris, which I flatter myself will promote a reconciliation between them; but I think it will be better if I deliver it myself. Mr. Harris was so obliging as to promise to let me see him at his return to town, which I conclude must

[4] The Great Duke had fetched from Rome the group of Niobe and her children, and placed them round a chamber; by which means they remained in strange unmeaning attitudes, and no longer expressed their story. *Walpole.*

now be near, as the season approaches of opening the theatres. I will be much obliged to you, therefore, Sir, if you will be so good as to let me know when Mr. Harris arrives; but do not mention the letter, as I had rather have some conversation with him before I produce it. I beg pardon for all the trouble I give you, and am

Your very grateful
and obedient humble servant,
Hor. Walpole.

2207. To the Earl of Strafford.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 31, 1781.

Your Lordship's too friendly partiality sees talents in me which I am sure I do not possess. With all my desire of amusing you, and with all my sense of gratitude for your long and unalterable goodness, it is quite impossible to send you an entertaining letter from hence. The insipidity of my life, that is passed with a few old people that are wearing out like myself, after surviving so many of my acquaintance, can furnish no matter of correspondence. What few novelties I hear, come stale, and not till they have been hashed in the newspapers; and though we are engaged in such big and wide wars, they produce no striking events, nor furnish anything but regrets for the lives and millions we fling away to no purpose! One cannot divert when one can only compute, nor extract entertainment from prophecies that there is no reason to colour favourably. We have, indeed, foretold success for seven years together, but debts and taxes have been the sole completion.

If one turns to private life, what is there to furnish pleasing topics? Dissipation, without object, pleasure, or genius, is the only colour of the times. One hears every day of somebody undone, but can we or they tell how,

except when it is by the most expeditious of all means, gaming? And now, even the loss of an hundred thousand pounds is not rare enough to be surprising. One may stare or growl, but cannot relate anything that is worth hearing. I do not love to censure a younger age; but in good truth, they neither amuse me nor enable me to amuse others.

The pleasantest event I know happened to myself last Sunday morning, when General Conway very unexpectedly walked in as I was at breakfast, in his way to Park Place. He looks as well in health and spirits as ever I saw him; and though he stayed but half an hour, I was perfectly content, as he is at home.

I am glad your Lordship likes the fourth book of *The Garden*, which is admirably coloured. The version of Fresnoy I think the finest translation I ever saw. It is a most beautiful poem, extracted from as dry and prosaic a parcel of verses as could be put together: Mr. Mason has gilded lead, and burnished it highly. Lord and Lady Harcourt I should think would make him a visit, and I hope, for their sakes, will visit Wentworth Castle. As they both have taste, I should be sorry they did not see the perfectest specimen of architecture I know.

Mrs. Damer certainly goes abroad this winter. I am glad of it for every reason but her absence. I am certain it will be essential to her health; and she has so eminently a classic genius, and is herself so superior an artist, that I enjoy the pleasure she will have in visiting Italy.

As your Lordship has honoured all the productions of my press with your acceptance, I venture to enclose the last, which I printed to oblige the Lucans. There are many beautiful and poetic expressions in it. A wedding, to be sure, is neither a new nor a promising subject, nor will outlast the favours: still I think Mr. Jones's Ode is un-

commonly good for the occasion[1]; at least, if it does not much charm Lady Strafford and your Lordship, I know you will receive it kindly as a tribute from Strawberry Hill, as every homage is due to you both from its master.

Your devoted humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2208. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 4, 1781.

I AM sorry your Ladyship is so like Dr. Johnson as not to understand the Grecian graces of odes, but to require them to be indited in as Dunstable prose as a bill in Chancery. Do you think as he does, that prose only should be encumbered with learning and a hash of languages, and that poetry should be as plain as the horn-book? I believe I could expound all your Ladyship's difficulties in Mr. Jones's ode if you had specified them. *Curled smiles*, the sole instance you produce, is not so beautiful as the next expression, *the bubbling tear*; but is very intelligible to any one who has seen an angel of Correggio, whose mouth is generally curled into a crescent, and in truth I think strains grace into almost a grimace. The clan of Howes would certainly have been more profuse on the transcendent qualities of their sovereign lady; but I believe Mr. Jones is not so zealous an idolater at that shrine. However, if the ode is not perfect, still the eighth, ninth, and tenth stanzas have merit enough to shock Dr. Johnson and such sycophant old nurses, and that is enough for me. How precious is any line of Demosthenes that offended King Philip and the whole court of Macedon!

Your other question, Madam, of who was Lady Elizabeth

LETTER 2207. — [1] The marriage of Lord Althorpe with Miss Bingham. *Walpole.*

Thimbleby, I cannot so well resolve: I only guess that she was no relation of that Maid of Honour of Queen Elizabeth, who died by pricking her finger with a needle.

The Library[1] I have read. There are some pretty lines and easy verses; but it is too long. One thought is charming, *that a dog, though a flatterer, is still a friend.* It made me give Tonton a warm kiss, and swear it was true.

I have heard of Lady Derby's imperial conquest; nor should I wonder if her mother[2] was immediately to transport her own rags of beauty to Vienna, since there is a monarch that can take up with remnants of charms, that indeed never were very charming.

I direct this to Ampthill, as you name no day for quitting it; yet if you have any remains of fever, you cannot change the air too soon. I have had a letter from Mr. Morrice, who tells me that he has received some of our judicial papers, but cannot open them, as he has been confined to his bed ten days by the gout. I should have said that it was only a note by another hand. Mine still writes with difficulty, though almost well; but having replied to your Ladyship's queries, and having nothing new to tell you, it shall take its leave.

2209. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Sept. 7, 1781.

The combined fleets, to the amount of forty-seven or forty-nine sail, brought news of their own arrival at the mouth of the Channel a day or two before your letter, of August the 18th, brought an account of that probability, and of the detachment for Minorca. Admiral Darby, on

Letter 2208.—[1] By George Crabbe (1754–1832), published by Dodsley at the instance of Burke.

[2] Elizabeth Gunning, Duchess of Hamilton and Argyll.

a false alarm, or, perhaps, a true one, had returned to Torbay a week ago, where he is waiting for reinforcements. This is the fourth or fifth day since the appearance of the enemy off Scilly. It is thought, I find here (whither I came to-day), that the great object is our Jamaica fleet; but that a detachment is gone to Ireland to do what mischief they can on the coast before our ally, the equinox, will beseech them to retire. Much less force than this armada would have done more harm two years ago, when they left a card at Plymouth, than this can do; as Plymouth is now very strong, and that there are great disciplined armies now in both islands. Of Gibraltar we have no apprehensions. I know less of Minorca[1].

Lord George Gordon is standing candidate for the City of London on an accidental vacancy[2]; but his premature alarm last year has had a similar effect. In short, those riots have made mankind sick of them, and give him no chance of success.

What can I say more? Nothing at present; but I will the moment any event presents itself. My hope is that, after a fermentation, there will be a settlement, and that peace will arise out of it.

The decree[3] you sent me against high heads diverted me. It is as necessary here, but would not have such expeditious effect. The Queen has never admitted feathers at court; but, though the nation has grown excellent courtiers, fashion remained in opposition, and not a plume less was worn anywhere else. Some centuries ago, the clergy

LETTER 2209.—[1] On Aug. 20, 1781, a force of 16,000 French and Spaniards under the Duc de Crillon landed at Port Mahon and blockaded Fort St. Philip. General Murray, the Governor, with 2,016 regular troops (of whom 400 were invalids) and 200 seamen, held out till Feb. 5, 1782. In the course of the siege De Crillon offered Murray a large bribe if he would surrender, but met with an indignant refusal.

[2] He retired before the election.

[3] An Ordinance of the Great Duke against high head-dresses. *Walpole.*

preached against monstrous head-dresses; but religion had no more power than our Queen. It is better to leave the mode to its own vagaries; if she is not contradicted, she seldom remains long in the same mood. She is very despotic; but, though her reign is endless, her laws are repealed as fast as made.

Mrs. Damer, General Conway's daughter, is going abroad to confirm a very delicate constitution—I believe at Naples. I will say very few words on her, after telling you that, besides being his daughter, I love her as my own child. It is not from wanting matter, but from having too much. She has one of the most solid understandings I ever knew, astonishingly improved, but with so much reserve and modesty, that I have often told Mr. Conway he does not know the extent of her capacity and the solidity of her reason. We have by accident discovered, that she writes Latin like Pliny, and is learning Greek. In Italy she will be a prodigy. She models like Bernini, has excelled the moderns in the similitudes of her busts, and has lately begun one in marble. You must keep all knowledge of these talents and acquisitions to yourself; she would never forgive my mentioning them, at least her mental qualities. You may just hint that I have talked of her statuary, as you may assist her if she has a mind to borrow anything to copy from the Great Duke's collection. Lady William Campbell, her uncle's widow, accompanies her, who is a very reasonable woman too, and equally shy. If they return through Florence, pray give them a parcel of my letters. I had been told your nephew would make you a visit this autumn, but I have heard nothing of him. If you should see him, pray give him the parcel, for he will return sooner than they.

Not a word from Lucas. Sharpe has sent some papers to Mr. Morrice, but he is in the country, and too ill with

the gout to open them. I sometimes suspect that my plain dealing will make my Lord drop me and my refereeship. I shall not be sorry on my own account or Mozzi's, for then I think they will offer him some accommodation.

I have a gouty pain in my hand, that would prevent my saying more, had I more to say.

2210. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 9, 1781.

The dead calm, which occasioned such a paucity of my letters, seems to be thoroughly at an end, for some time. It was but a *grim repose.* Gibraltar is besieged, Minorca besieged, New York, I believe, besieged; and I am sure Great Britain is besieged—forty-seven or nine French and Spanish ships of the line at the gates of the Channel, and Admiral Darby with only twenty-two in Torbay, is a blockade to some purpose. The wind, however, has ruffled the trenches of the latter, and driven them from their station, and they have also lost a seventy-four gun ship. But unless this warning reminds them of the approaching equinox, it is probable that they will return to their post for another fortnight. This is the prevalent opinion—I do not tell you that it is mine, for I have none. I have long found that I do not shine at conjectures. I have guessed right about nothing but that the storm would come at last. I shall go on to tell you what others think, or say they do. It is supposed that the Jamaica fleet, worth four millions, is the immediate object—and no trifling one! Some think an attempt will be made to burn the stores at Cork. What should hinder? or other attacks on the coast! If I divined intentions, it would be that France is willing to put an end to their own expense in the war, and after exhausting us so long, will force the most unopening eyes in the universe to

give up the frantic vision of recovering America. I am sure we must, if we would save anything.

This is the sum total of what I can learn; matter enough to dissert upon if such were my propensity! but besides not loving talkation, it is painful to me to write. A finger of my right hand has opened with an explosion of chalk-stones; five have come out, and it is still big with another. I have nobody to dictate to, for my printer-secretary is gone into Warwickshire.

I have received your fourth book[1], and give you many thanks. You may receive as many more for your *Fresnoy* whenever you please, and ten thousand more for anything I have *not* seen. I am not afraid of giving you *carte blanche* for any bill you will draw on me.

Though this is but my second letter, remember it is twice as many as I have received from you; and you have not a lame finger. With the dowager life I lead, it is marvellous that I can write anything but tittle-tattle and scandal, but happily, as my memory is on the wane, I remember nothing of that sort. It is true I perceive more serious flaws, but is it lamentable to decay, when one has survived the glory of one's country? My wishes are limited now to peace—I care not what sort of peace; the longer it is deferred, the worse it must be. Only boyish gamesters flatter themselves that a good run can retrieve a fortune that is lost, and only idiot gamesters believe in luck against calculation. Gamesters we are: distress and disgrace have had no effect; we play on against those who have shown they will risk nothing. Is this credible of a whole nation? You perhaps still think that a whole nation may be corrected. I do not. Burn their cards and dice, and perhaps when they are cool they may come to their senses—at least their children, whom they will leave beggars, will think of earning an

Letter 2210.—[1] The fourth book of Mason's poem, *The English Garden*.

honest livelihood. However, those are speculations for those who amuse themselves with peeping into futurity. I have almost done with time, and only sigh for a few hours of tranquillity.

2211. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 11, 1781,
2 o'clock.

Though this is to go by your own servant Cardini, I shall write but three words: for, in the first place, I don't know but he may be set out before this can possibly get to town, whence my own servant brought me yours this moment from him; and secondly, as he may be taken at sea, I shall say little. Not a tittle of event has happened since the combined fleets were at the entrance of the Channel, where they certainly will not venture to stay long: the wind blows very hard to-day, and may do them great mischief. They have no transports; and, if they mean any attempt on land, it will be on Ireland: but it will be no surprise, and it is generally thought they only wait to intercept our Jamaica fleet. Minorca I conclude will be taken. I am happy to hear you are so well, as I am.

2212. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Wednesday night, Sept. 12.

I would not answer your last, Madam, till I could tell you something on better authority than my own—yet that something is but another's conjecture. I have been at Ditton this evening, where Lord Hertford told me that he thinks the combined fleets are retired. A neutral ship has met them sailing westward; and it is hoped they have suffered by a storm—this is war! One sits at home

coolly *hoping* that five or six vessels full of many hundreds of men are gone to the bottom of the deep! Can one look back on the last six years and not shudder at the devastation deliberate love of power has committed—to the utter loss of power! The fleets have been seen off Kingsale; but Lord H. could not be easy if he expected any attempt upon Ireland[1]. He flatters himself the Czarina will make peace for us, but she must first make us make peace. As to any landing here, it has not been apprehended. The enemies have no transports with them; but indeed we have no intelligence neither. They have landed on Minorca, and General Murray's wife and family, with other English-women, have escaped to Leghorn. It must have been a shocking separation! There is little chance, I believe, of the islands being saved. We shall be pared to the quick, while we are dreaming of recovering America; we might as sensibly pursue our claim to the crown of France. Have you seen this epigram, which, for aught I know, may have been in the newspapers?

> Oh England, no wonder your troubles begin,
> When blockaded without, and block-headed within.

I am glad I have been a physical prophet, Madam, and that change of air has cured your fever.

I have met Miss Lloyd at Lady Di's. She is superlatively inflated with the odours that flowed from the Emperor on her and Lady Clermont. 'We sat round him, and he put us quite at our ease.' 'He would not have put me so,' said I; 'I have seen a good deal of princes in my day, and always found, that if they put themselves at their ease, they did not at all like that I should put myself so.' I demurred too, to the great admiration: I remember when the Lady Clermonts of that time wept for the departure of the Duke of Lorrain,

LETTER 2212.—[1] He had large estates there.

the late emperor, and yet he proved an oaf. This man announces too much; we shall see. Then came the Archduchess[2], and then Duke Albert. 'You know he is to be inaugurated four times.' 'God forbid I should know it!' said I, 'I should be sorry to know how often a German prince is to go through a ceremony.' The Duke of Richmond told me a much better story, a sequel to the Duchess of Chandos's[3] history, which you have heard, how she proposed the Princess Royal to the Emperor. Mr. Fitzherbert[4] told her he had heard of a great marriage on foot. Her Grace was mysterious—'What match?' He told her. 'Why, surely,' replied she, 'the Emperor has not divulged it yet! I really beg your pardon, Mr. Fitzherbert, for interfering in your province, but I will make you all the amends I can: I shall certainly be appointed to conduct the Princess to Vienna, and I will ask for you to accompany us.'

I have at last received all (I shall ever have) of Madame du Deffand's papers. *All*, I know, there are not, for I miss some; but there are some very curious, and some of her own dear writing, admirable.

I have made some purchases, too, at Mr. Sheldon's[5], very cheap indeed, and shall go to town on Friday to see them. I have made a gold-fishpond, too; in short, I am as busy and trifling as if I were still lord of the ocean: I do not know but I may soon go a-hunting in a white hat lined with green. Your Ladyship, I suppose, goes a-shooting, in the absence of Lord Ossory, lest the pheasants and partridges

[2] Maria Christina, eldest daughter of the Empress Maria Theresa, and wife of Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen. The Duke and Archduchess had recently been appointed governors of the Austrian Netherlands.

[3] Anne Eliza, daughter of Richard Gamon and widow of Roger Hope Elletson; m. (1777) James Brydges, third Duke of Chandos; d. 1813.

[4] Alleyne (1753–1839), fifth son of William Fitzherbert, of Tissington Hall, Derbyshire; cr. (Jan. 26, 1791) Baron St. Helens in Ireland. He was at this time minister at Brussels. He acted in 1783 as Plenipotentiary to settle the peace with France, Spain, and the United Provinces, and subsequently held other diplomatic appointments.

[5] William Sheldon, of Weston, in Warwickshire.

should think you are alarmed. It is the modern way; we souse into diversions to conceal our panics. All the watering-places are thronged; one would think this was the most unhealthy country in Europe. On the contrary, this proves it is the most healthy, for nineteen go to amuse themselves, for one that goes for illness. Mercy on us! how we shall stare, if ever we come to our senses again!

P.S. Lady Mary Coke has had an hundred distresses abroad, that do not weigh a silver penny altogether. She is like Don Quixote, who went in search of adventures, and when he found none imagined them. She went to Brussels, to see the Archduchess, but either had bad intelligence, or the Archduchess very good, for she was gone when Lady Mary arrived; so was the packet-boat at Ostend, which she believes was sent away on purpose, by a codicil in the Empress Queen's will.

You must get some standard pomegranates, Madam. I have one now in this room, above five feet high, in a pot, in full blow. At Paris, they mix them with their orange-trees.

2213. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 16, 1781.

I am not surprised that such a mind as yours cannot help expressing gratitude: it would not be your mind, if it could command that sensation as triumphantly as it does your passions. Only remember that the expression is unnecessary. I do know that you feel the entire friendship I have for you; nor should I love you so well if I was not persuaded of it. There never was a grain of anything romantic in my friendship for you. We loved one another from children, and as so near relations; but my friendship

grew up with your virtues, which I admired, though I did not imitate. We had scarce one in common but disinterestedness. Of the reverse we have both, I may say, been so absolutely clear, that there is nothing so natural and easy as the little monied transactions between us; and therefore, knowing how perfectly indifferent I am upon that head, and remembering the papers I showed you, and what I said to you when I saw you last, I am sure you will have the complaisance never to mention thanks more. —Now, to answer your questions.

As to coming to you, as that *feu grégeois* Lord George Gordon has given up the election, to my great joy, I can come to you on Sunday next. It is true, I had rather you visited your regiment first, for this reason: I expect summons to Nuneham every day; and besides, having never loved two journeys instead of one, I grow more covetous of my time, as I have little left, and therefore had rather take Park Place, going and coming, on my way to Lord Harcourt.

I don't know a word of news, public or private. I am deep in my dear old friend's[1] papers. There are some very delectable; and though I believe—nay, know, I have not quite all, there are many which I almost wonder, after the little delicacy they[2] have shown, ever arrived to my hands. I dare to say they will not be quite so just to the public; for though I consented that the correspondence with Voltaire should be given to the editors of his works, I am persuaded that there are many passages at least which they will suppress, as very contemptuous to his chief votaries—I mean, of the votaries to his sentiments; for, like other heresiarchs, he despised his tools. If I live to see the

Letter 2213.—[1] Madame du Deffand, who died in September 1781 *, and left all her papers to Mr. Walpole. *Walpole.*

[2] He means the executors of Madame du Deffand. *Walpole.*

* A slip of the pen for 1780.

edition, it will divert me to collate it with what I have in my hands.

You are the person in the world the fittest to encounter the meeting you mention for the choice of a bridge[3]. You have temper and patience enough to bear with fools and false taste. I, so unlike you, have learned some patience with both sorts too, but by a more summary method than by waiting to instil reason into them. Mine is only by leaving them to their own vagaries, and by despairing that sense and taste should ever extend themselves. Adieu!

P.S. In Voltaire's letters are some bitter traits on the King of Prussia, which, as he is defender of their no-faith, I conclude will be *rayés* too.

2214. To Sir Horace Mann.

Sept. 19, 1781.

I HAVE received your letter of the 4th to-day, in which you send me your late dates. I have no doubt of having received them all, but cannot verify it, as they are at Strawberry, and I am in town. That of mine which you received so long after the term, I conclude was neglected at the office; for why should they detain it? My letters certainly contain nothing of consequence. I am in no secrets of any party, and certainly should not trust them to the post if I knew any—still less to all posts, English, Austrian, Dutch, and Italian. I have lived too long, besides being a Prime Minister's son, not to know that letters are opened; and, consequently, what I write anybody is welcome to see, if they have such curiosity. You, I believe, find that I seldom tell you anything but what you have seen before

[3] The bridge over the Thames at Henley, to whose singular beauty the good taste of Mr. Conway materially contributed. *Walpole.*

in some public newspaper. The almost sole merit of my letters is that I mean to ascertain your belief, that, when I repeat what you have read in the papers, you may be sure that it is true, or that I at least believe it. My sentiments are pretty well known, and, were they of any importance, it is not now that they are to be learnt.

Lucas has sent me a copy of the same paper that Mr. Sharpe sent to Mr. Morrice. It is an old statement of Lady Orford's claims, with Mr. Yorke's opinion, not a favourable one. Yet my eldest brother obtained a decree in his favour on much the same grounds, which is at least as good as Mr. Yorke's opinion. We now wait for my Lord's claims. His own letter to Cav. Mozzi, of which you tell me to-day, has all the air of the claims being suggested by the lawyers, as from the first moment I guessed they would be. Still while there is such a quality as duplicity, I am not easily credulous.

I can tell you little of the combined fleets but contradictions. Our papers say, they are returned to Brest. Others say, they are still cruising to the West, in expectation of our mercantile fleets. As variously I hear of Darby: the printed authorities make him returned to Torbay; the verbal, at sea. All I prove is, that I don't know which accounts are true. Minorca I have given up; though we read daily of a Russian fleet in the Mediterranean, to whom we are supposed to have ceded it—a little late to be sure: I question whether the Czarina would accept a present encumbered with a law-suit.

One good event I do know: Lord George Gordon has given up his pretensions of being member for London. It is still better, that he dropped his pursuit on finding that the City did not choose to burn once a year for his amusement.

Though I knew your nephew talked of making you a visit

this autumn, you surprise me by thinking him set out: nay, I do not affirm that he is not, yet I should think he would have let me know. Moreover, Mrs. Noel, a near relation of Lady Lucy[1], and in constant correspondence with Lord Gainsborough's family, and whom I see three or four times a week at the Duchess of Montrose's at Twickenham Park, knows not a word of his being gone: we talk of him frequently. Yet my equal ignorance of Galluzzi's History staggers me. I can only suppose that it lies at your nephew's house in town, and that he has not been in London for some time. I am impatient, yet I shall not lay violent hands on it without his knowledge. I do wish you to have the comfort of seeing him; it will make me amends for waiting for the house of Medici. You *will* have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Damer, whom I announced in my last.

There is a perfect dearth of all private news, as usual at this season, when the campaign is opened against poor partridges and pheasants, and which is as hot as if we had no other occasion for gunpowder! It is well, however, to have all England good marksmen.

I forgot to say that there is talk of an armistice with Holland. May it be true! though I fear peace is not so catching as war: yet, as the demon of blood has breakfasted, dined, and supped so plentifully, I should hope he had gotten a surfeit; nay, he must let the calves grow up and be fat, when he has devoured hecatombs of oxen, if he means to gormandize on. Adieu!

2215. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 25, 1781.

I did guess that you was combating the evil one and had no time to answer idle letters. Nay, but I am glad that

Letter 2214.—[1] The late wife of Sir Horace Mann the younger. She was Lord Gainsborough's sister.

you have erected altar against altar and attacked the Priest of Baal in his own high places. Still I hope you will find a moment to pay your *lay*-debts too, especially as posterity will call on you for that liquidation, which said posterity will certainly never hear of your Metropolitan's charge to his clergy; and which he had better have given in bad Latin like Bishop Butler's Concio ad Clerum; and then neither the dead Romans nor his own Westminster scholars[1] would have understood it. Soame Jenyns's *Ode on Odes* and Johnson's Life of Gray are still unchastised. Apropos, have you seen the Doctor's character of Warburton in his Life of Addison? It is ten times more like to himself than to the bishop, and expressed in the same uncouth phrases which he satirizes.

Yes, be assured I shall go to Nuneham. I wait for my summons, and delay my visit to Park Place on that account that I may kill two journeys with one stone; for I grow very thrifty of my travels as I advance in years, and do not like to waste unnecessary hours on the road.

I know no more news than if it was my duty to have intelligence. I heard a minister t'other night joking on the equinoctial winds which would send the combined fleets packing; how *comical*! I mean their being here. Neptune, they say, is to have a pension like Lord Dunmore[2] for having lost his government. There is a new epigram that came to my hand t'other day:—

O England, no wonder your troubles begin,
When blockaded without and *block-headed* within.

I cannot resolve you whether Sir Joshua Reynolds is returned or not. Is your *Fresnoy* to remain in embryo till he writes notes on it? and how does it want notes? I met

LETTER 2215. — [1] Markham was Head Master of Westminster School, 1753-65.

[2] Lord Dunmore was Governor of Virginia when the war broke out.

with a thought of Voltaire t'other day that pleased me, though not at all to the purpose of what I was saying. He is declaring against the possibility of translating poets, and asks whether *music can be translated*? Your *Fresnoy* is no exception, for you have translated his prosaic verses into poetry. I wish you do not translate his Grace of York to Canterbury! Atterbury said in his controversy with Wake, 'Many a man has been written out of character into preferment.' It is the sort of martyrdom that great churchmen do not wince at. Adieu!

P.S. I desire to see your sermon.

2216. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 3, 1781.

There may be wars over half the globe, and yet they may not furnish a paragraph to the newspapers every day, nor matter for a letter once a fortnight. Besides, polished nations act more out of spite than anger, and had rather civilly murder one another by a consumption, than by knocking out each other's brains. You and I remember, a few years ago, that a King of Prussia could gallop from Bohemia to Dantzic, whisk back to Silesia, bounce like an apparition into Saxony, pick up a victory here and a defeat there, and put newswriters out of breath with following or hunting him. France and Spain are other-guess enemies. They undermine our funds, inveigle us into taxes, and never offer us a battle, but with such superiority that we dare not accept it. I am sorry we are so simple as to humour them in this unfair warfare! it costs us millions to play a losing game, without a soul betting on our side. We verily believe the combined fleets are gone to their several homes; in the interim we are viceroys of the Channel again during their

pleasure; thanks to our only ally the equinox! The fleet from the Leeward Islands is arrived safely. You must send us news of Minorca. Our Mediterranean post-office is a little out of repair.

Thus, having no immediate object of your curiosity to satisfy, I shall not hurry my gazettes. I am tired of writing to say I have nothing to write.

Lord Rochford[1] is dead. The other Nassau your Prince Cowper, the papers say, is arrived in England; as great a stranger as any *outlandish* Prince, as the vulgar call it, could be.

Wednesday, at night.

Poor Mr. Morrice is gone, or going, to Bath; but this will not interrupture[2] our judicature in Cav. Mozzi's affair, for the former told me last week that he had learnt that the state of my Lord's demands will not be ready before December. If the defendant has not contracted great reverence for the equity of our law, he will not have a much better opinion of its dispatch.

Well; I find Lord Cowper is not come; which is not extraordinary, as his arrival would be after twenty years of absence. Mr. Beauclerk[3], whom you have seen of late, I conclude, with Lady Catharine, is now a peer: his father, Lord Vere, is just dead, at eighty-one. Your nephew, I hope, is with you.

LETTER 2216. —[1] William Henry Nassau de Zulestein, fourth Earl of Rochford.

[2] So in MS.

[3] Aubrey Beauclerk, second Lord Vere, married, in 1763, Lady Catharine Ponsonby, eldest daughter of the Earl of Besborough. The first Lord Vere was a younger son of the first Duke of St. Albans. In 1787, by the death of his cousin George, grandson of Lord William Beauclerk, he became fifth Duke of St. Albans. *Walpole.*

2217. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 7, 1781.

I beg your Ladyship's pardon for not returning the History of Fotheringay, which I now enclose.

The new Veres have been returned to England these six weeks, and I visited them at their palace (as it really was of Henry VIII) at Hanworth not long after their arrival. All their near kin have done so too, and *tout s'est passé comme si de rien n'étoit.* Their fellow traveller is left behind. We live in such an awkward unfashionable nook here, that we have not yet heard Lord Vere's will, nor know whether Lord Richard Cavendish is dead or alive. *I* am so much awkwarder still, and treasure up scandal so little, that, though I heard the Brighthelmstone story, I have quite forgotten who the principal personage was—so you will not fear my repeating it. I do not design to know a circumstance about Admiral Rodney and Admiral Ferguson. We are to appearance at war with half Europe and a quarter of America, and yet our warfare is only fending and proving, and is fitter for the Quarter Sessions than for history. It costs us seventeen or eighteen millions a year to inquire whether our Generals and Admirals are rogues or fools; and, since most of them are only one or t'other, I would not give half a crown to know which. The nation is such an oaf as to amuse itself with these foolish discussions, and does not perceive that six years and above forty millions, and half our territories, have been thrown away in such idle pastime. How the grim heroes of Edward III and Henry V would stare at hearing that this is our way of making war on France!

The night I had the honour of writing to your Ladyship last, I was robbed—and, as if I were a sovereign or a nation,

have had a discussion ever since whether it was not a *neighbour* who robbed me—and should it come to the ears of the newspapers, it might produce as ingenious a controversy amongst our anonymous wits as any of the noble topics I have been mentioning. *Voici le fait.* Lady Browne and I were, as usual, going to the Duchess of Montrose at seven o'clock. The evening was very dark. In the close lane under her park-pale, and within twenty yards of the gate, a black figure on horseback pushed by between the chaise and the hedge on my side. I suspected it was a highwayman, and so I found did Lady Browne, for she was speaking and stopped. To divert her fears, I was just going to say, 'Is not that the apothecary going to the Duchess?' when I heard a voice cry 'Stop!' and the figure came back to the chaise. I had the presence of mind, before I let down the glass, to take out my watch and stuff it within my waistcoat under my arm. He said, 'Your purses and watches!' I replied, 'I have no watch.' 'Then your purse!' I gave it to him; it had nine guineas. It was so dark that I could not see his hand, but felt him take it. He then asked for Lady Browne's purse, and said, 'Don't be frightened; I will not hurt you.' I said, 'No; you won't frighten the lady?' He replied, 'No; I give you my word I will do you no hurt.' Lady Browne gave him her purse, and was going to add her watch, but he said, 'I am much obliged to you! I wish you good night!' pulled off his hat, and rode away. 'Well,' said I, 'Lady Browne, you will not be afraid of being robbed another time, for you see there is nothing in it.' 'Oh, but I am,' said she, 'and now I am in terrors lest he should return, for I have given him a purse with only bad money that I carry on purpose.' 'He certainly will not open it directly,' said I, 'and at worst he can only wait for us at our return; but I will send my servant back for a horse and a blunderbuss,' which I did. The next

distress was not to terrify the Duchess, who is so paralytic and nervous. I therefore made Lady Browne go into the parlour, and desired one of the Duchess's servants to get her a glass of water, while I went into the drawing-room to break it to the Duchess. 'Well,' said I, laughing to her and the rest of the company, 'you won't get much from us to-night.' 'Why,' said one of them, 'have you been robbed?' 'Yes, a little,' said I. The Duchess trembled; but it went off. Her groom of the chambers said not a word, but slipped out, and Lady Margaret[1] and Miss Howe having servants there on horseback, he gave them pistols and dispatched them different ways. This was exceedingly clever, for he knew the Duchess would not have suffered it, as lately he had detected a man who had robbed her garden, and she would not allow him to take up the fellow. These servants spread the story, and when my footman arrived on foot, he was stopped in the street by the hostler of the 'George,' who told him the highwayman's horse was then in the stable; but this part I must reserve for the second volume, for I have made this no story so long and so tedious that your Ladyship will not be able to read it in a breath; and the second part is so much longer and so much less, contains so many examinations of witnesses, so many contradictions in the depositions, which I have taken myself, and, I must confess, with such abilities and shrewdness that I have found out nothing at all, that I think to defer the prosecution of my narrative till all the other inquisitions on the anvil are liquidated, lest your Ladyship's head, strong as it is, should be confounded, and you should imagine that Rodney or Ferguson was the person who robbed us in Twickenham Lane. I would not have detailed the story at all if you were not in a forest, where it will serve to put you to sleep as well as a newspaper full of lies; and I am sure there is

LETTER 2217.—[1] Lady Margaret Compton.

as much dignity in it as in the combined fleet, and ours popping in and out alternately, like a man and woman in a weather-house.

2218. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 9, 1781.

I shall do what you desired[1] to-morrow; it was impossible sooner. This is the substance of my letter: the rest will be garnish; for though I have been robbed on the highway, I should not have thought it important enough for a dispatch on purpose. Lady Browne and I going to the Duchess of Montrose here at Twickenham Park on Thursday night, as we often do, were robbed by a single horseman within few yards of the park gate. She lost a trifle, and I nine guineas; but I had the presence of mind before I let down the glass to take out my watch and put it within my waistcoat under my arm. The gentleman, for so I believe he was, declared himself much obliged, pulled off his hat, wished us good night, and I suppose will soon have leave to raise a regiment.

I go to Park Place the day after to-morrow, but think I shall not proceed to Nuneham. I have not heard from Lord Harcourt, but Mr. Stonhewer called here a few days ago and says the house is pulled to pieces, and consequently in great disorder, which I conclude is the reason of my not being summoned.

All the papers say Lord Richard Cavendish is dead; I was scarce acquainted with him, nor ever heard anything but good of him. My not knowing yet whether his death is true, shows you what an awkward angle we live in, and

Letter 2218.—[1] Mason, who had written a letter under a *nom de guerre* for publication in the *London Courant*, had asked Walpole to correct it, and to have it transcribed before sending it to a bookseller in Piccadilly.

how little we hear: we are forced to be robbed now and then at our own doors, that we may have a paragraph that we can call our own. Adieu!

2219. To John Henderson.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 15, 1781.

I am distressed, and know not whither to apply but to you, who I doubt will repent your facility in getting me out of difficulties. If I am not modest, I am at least too conscientious, to press the favour I am going to ask, if you do not care to undertake it, or shall hold it imprudent. Mr. Harris seems to have forgotten, or chooses to defer, his promise of calling on me.

Mr. Jephson I doubt will be very impatient, and suspect me of carelessness in not having delivered his letter; and yet I am sure it would have better effect if I heard Mr. Harris's complaints before I deliver it. I must be in town on Thursday for a day or two. Would it be possible to let Mr. Harris know, so that he might call on me in Berkeley Square on Friday morning? Would it look too much like a plot, if you told him so? I truly wish to serve Mr. Jephson, and yet, I fear, totally innocent as I am, that blame will fall on me, if the play[1] is not acted this winter. You, who are well acquainted with authors and managers, know what jealous waspish folks both branches of those allied families are. You, who are our cousin, have a cross of good-humour, that is singularly unlike the rest of our kin.

It will make you forgive

Your affectionate relation,

Hor. Walpole.

Letter 2219.—[1] Jephson's tragedy, *The Count of Narbonne*, founded on Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*. It was produced at Covent Garden Theatre in Nov. 1781.

2220. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 17, 1781.

My story is grown cold, Madam, and I am tired of it, and should make nothing of it now. In short, though it has had a codicil, it has ended nohow, and is only fit to entertain the village where it happened. The quintessence was that a great corn-factor, who is in bad odour here on the highway, arrived at the 'George' a moment after or before our robbery, and was suspected, and my footman thought he could swear to the horse; and then Zoffany, the painter, was robbed, and his footman was ready to take his bible to the person of a haberdasher, intimate of the corn-factor; but Mr. Smallwares proved an *alibi*, and the corn-factor gave a ball—and none but the dancers acquit him—and so much for an idle story. Your Ladyship's idiot was more tremendous than our Corn-way-man.

I am not likely to hear of a place, Madam, for your *recommandée*, but will propose her if I should.

I see Graves[1] and Hood have been tolerably beaten[2]; I do not wish Hood unthrashed, but I had rather it was Commodore Johnstone that had met with a drubbing, instead of a rich booty. I read, too, that Lord Cornwallis is trying to house his tattered laurels at New York; and for that I am not much grieved neither. Since we are to be cuffed from one end of Europe to t'other end of America, I am glad when renegades are our representatives. I hope Lord Dunmore is going to have his dose.

Letter 2220.—[1] Admiral Thomas Graves (1725–1802), cr. (Oct. 24, 1794) Baron Graves of Gravesend. He took a distinguished part in the victory of the First of June, 1794.

[2] In the action off the Chesapeake on Sept. 5, 1781. Graves unexpectedly found himself opposed to De Grasse's fleet of twenty-four ships of the line. His van was disabled, and the rear, commanded by Hood, never got into action. Graves withdrew to New York.

I heard at Park Place that the Prince of Wales has lately made a visit to Lady Cecilia Johnstone, where Lady Sarah Napier [3] was. She did not appear, but he insisted on seeing her, and said, 'She was to have been there,' pointing to Windsor Castle. When she came down, he said he did not wonder at his father's admiring her, and was persuaded she had not been more beautiful then.

Lord Richard Cavendish is indubitably dead, and so I see is Lord Kelly [4]. As this is but a postscript to my last, your Ladyship will excuse its brevity.

2221. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 18, 1781.

Happening to come to town to-day, I found the two sets of the history of the Medici. I hasten to tell you so, that your nephew may not be unquiet about their remaining *chez lui.* I do not thank you but for your trouble; for I insist on your telling your nephew the price, that I may pay him at his return. You know I have made a law against presents, and it would be curious if I broke my own ordinance in a still more flagrant instance of *asking* for them. This was a commission, and do not imagine that I would not only beg a present, but a double one.

Though I came to town on business, my impatience was so great that I could not help dipping; and, as you may guess, turned to the story of Bianca Capello. It is a little palliated, yet I think was clearly an empoisonment. I find, too, more freedom than I expected, though promised. I did apprehend that characters of princes, drawn under the eye

[3] Lady Sarah Lennox, who was divorced from Sir Charles Bunbury in 1776, married on Aug. 27, 1781, Hon. George Napier, sixth son of fifth Lord Napier. Lady Cecilia Johnston's husband, General Johnston, was Captain Napier's uncle.

[4] Thomas Alexander Erskine (1732-1781), sixth Earl of Kellie. He was well known as a musician.

of a prince, would be softened and softened, till scarce a speck would remain; but, by that of Duke Francis, I perceive that the Great Duke has surmounted many royal prejudices. The style seems simple and natural, and does not aspire to dignity or beauty of diction. One term, often repeated, sounds very vulgar. The author talks of the *impudenza* of Bianca's arts and conduct. This is a very gross word, in spite of the Italian liquids in the termination. In England and France we are too refined to use so coarse a phrase. Mr. Gibbon would not use it on a Pope or a father of the Church; and to employ it on a lady, and a sovereign lady! mercy on us! What would Galluzzi say of the legislatress Catharine of Russia? of that idol of modern philosophers? whose *ascent* Voltaire called, *only a family squabble*, with which he would not meddle. This is the way in which the good-breeding of the present age mentions atrocious deeds;

Just hints a crime, and hesitates dislike.

The torpor of the times has been a little roused this week by some packets of events. The Admirals Graves and Hood have attacked a superior French fleet at the mouth of the Chesapeak, and have not beaten it. It is the business of the French, not ours, to say who did beat. I doubt we did not gain a naval crown, and have lost a seventy-four gun ship. In return, Commodore Johnstone has taken[1] four rich Dutchmen, and our India fleet is arrived—which Johnstone is not. However, he is the hero of the day, as Admiral Rodney has a little over-gilt his own statue[2], and Lord Cornwallis is trying to scramble to New York, without having quite conquered America. Lord Hawke[3] is dead, and does not seem to have bequeathed his mantle to anybody.

LETTER 2221.—[1] In Saldanha Bay on July 21, 1781.

[2] By the plunder of St. Eustatia. *Walpole.*

[3] A capital naval hero in the war of 1759. *Walpole.*

Last week I received a letter from Lucas, to tell me that he is still laid up with the gout, which indeed does not prevent our entering on Cav. Mozzi's business, as Mr. Morrice is gone to Bath on the same account—but this excuse was not the principal object of the letter. It was to notify to me, and to consult *me* on a curious idea of my nephew, which I think will confirm to you all I have told you of the perfect state of his intellects, and which perhaps he means as evidence of their soundness. After so total a want of attention to his mother, to say no worse of it, for indeed it did not exceed hers for him; after litigating part of her will, and while he *is* litigating it, filial piety has started into his poor head, and he intends to erect a monument for her at Leghorn, where to be sure it is very creditable to him and her to have it remembered that she was buried: and that every English sailor that lands there may inquire how it happened, the inscription is to be in English—and here are the tender words, 'Near this place are interred the remains of Margaret Rolle, Countess Dowager of Orford, in her own right Baroness Clinton, who died at Pisa . . . 1781, *universally lamented,* in the 71st year of her age.'

My opinion was asked, but luckily Lucas happened to say, that he had been told it is usual abroad to specify the maiden name. On this I pretended to understand that part as the object of the consultation; and declaring my approbation, said nothing on the rest. It is not impossible but the junto expected and hoped that I would object to the universal lamentation, which I took care not to do. I have no malice to the poor woman, nor would say a hard thing on her now: nor am I eager to give advice to my Lord, who never took any from me; nor does it signify if he adds one more absurdity to the rest. Destroying the monument of his grandfather's glory, and erecting one to his mother, who had better be forgotten, would be contradictions in another

man—in him, they are only emanations of his malady. You, my dear Sir, are to superintend this testimonial of his affection, which I am to impart to you when he has fixed on the plan. I said you would gladly obey his orders. Perhaps he will think no more of it.

I do not find the least curiosity stirring about Minorca. If it is lost, the public will be content, should it produce a court-martial, which is found to be an excellent soporific on all our disasters.—We have wherewithal to pass the winter very agreeably. Adieu!

2222. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Oct. 26, 1781.

In good sooth, Madam, I do not know who is the grandmother of charity, unless it means the present Duke of Montagu, in whose breasts I conclude there is not a drop of the milk of charity left, *vu* the dirt he has discovered in his transactions with Lady Beaulieu, since the death of Tisiphone her sister. Old Marlborough or old Duchess Montagu could not be that grandmother, unless they may be called the grandames of charity—children, who would willingly have left some of their own children to the parish. The friend who wrote the verses was perhaps Bishop Hurd, or Lord Brudenel, or Lady Greenwich, or one of the King's footmen.

I have heard a very indifferent account of poor Mr. Morrice from Lady Margaret Compton, who says Dr. Turton has a bad opinion of him. He is at Bath, and that delays our consultation on Cav. Mozzi's affair. Of my nephew, I have received just such accounts as Lord Ossory gives. I wish he would fix on his isthmus of Corinth for the scene of an exploit he has got in that head which all the world finds so sensible. He is going to set up *at Leghorn* a monument for his mother, and has sent me the epitaph for my opinion. It says she

died *universally lamented.* Oh! that he would translate it into Greek or Coptic, or any *lingo* that every English sailor could not understand! I have answered very respectfully, as becomes a dutiful uncle, without giving any opinion or advice at all; for to contradict a madman is to persuade him. If he thinks I approve, he may change his mind.

In the meantime, while Mr. Morrice is incapable of attending our court, I have been transacting another knotty affair, of which I despaired, but have brought to an amicable hearing. Mr. Jephson's play on my *Otranto* has been committed to my care, on and off, for these twelve months. But he had chosen other guardians too. A lady genius persuaded him to give it to Mr. Sheridan, who having the opera and the nation to regulate besides, and some plays to write, neglected the poor Irish orphan. Then I was desired to recommend it to t'other house. Unfortunately a third guardian was appointed; and, though your Milesians have hearts unsteady as the equator, they have always an ecliptic that crosses their heads, and gives them a devious motion. When I applied to Mr. Manager Harris, it came out that the Hibernian trustee had originally engaged the play to him; and when Mr. Harris complained of the breach of promise, he was not softened by the too zealous friend. There had been twenty other mismanagements, and Mr. Harris would not hear the play named. As I have seen other negotiators of late miscarry by bullying first and bending afterwards, I took the counterpart, and in two days so softened the majesty of Covent Garden, that he has not only engaged to act the tragedy, but by the beginning of December, when my utmost hopes did not expect to see it before spring.

Nor was this my only difficulty. Mrs. Yates is dying, and the sole remaining actress, Miss Young[1], refused the

LETTER 2222.—[1] Elizabeth Younge (d. 1797), one of the leading actresses of the day. In 1785 she married the actor Alexander Pope.

part of the mother, because, as she said, Mrs. Crawfurd[2] had refused it. Mr. Harris begged me to write to Miss Young. I did; and to turn aside what I guessed to be the real motive of the refusal, I told her I would not suspect that Mrs. Crawfurd declined the part from preferring that of the daughter, because Mrs. Crawfurd must know the world too well not to be aware, that when a gentlewoman of middle age appears in a very juvenile part, it does but make that middle age more apparent. There was so much sugar strewed over this indirect truth, that even there I have succeeded too, and Miss Young has complied. I am to attend rehearsals, and give advice on scenes, dresses, &c., and so must be frequently in town. In short, my uncle never negotiated with more abilities. Pray, Madam, respect my various talents. I have lately acted as a Justice of Peace; am to sit as chancellor in a court of equity on my nephew's dispute with Mozzi; and have now been plenipotentiary to the sovereign of a theatre! What pity that I should have cut my abilities so late! Well! thus I unwrinkle my old age with whatever pastime presents itself, instead of growing ill-humoured or covetous, the resources of longevity.

Your Ladyship, however, seems to think that I have a good deal of wrongheadedness in my composition. I confess I have not that verbal patriotism which bids one say one wishes what one does not wish. I confess I do wish better to the Americans than to the Scotch, because the cause of the former is more just. The English in America are as much my countrymen as those born in the parish of St. Martin-in-the-Fields; and, when my countrymen quarrel, I think I am free to wish better to the sufferers than to the aggressors. I do look on Lord Cornwallis as a renegade. He was one of five who protested against the Stamp Act. He therefore had no principles *then*, or has none now; and

[2] Formerly Mrs. Barry.

neither in compliance with the vulgar or the powerful, will I say I approve him.

If an alderman's son[3], not content with a decent fortune and a large portion of well-deserved immortality, is proud of becoming toad-eater to a Scotch Chief Justice, of having a few more words said to him at a levee than are vouchsafed to Dr. Dominiceti, and of being ordered to pen memorials for such boobies as Lord Suffolk and Lord Hillsborough, I do not wonder. But when a gentleman, a man of quality, sells himself for the paltry honours and profits that he must quit so soon, and leave nothing but a tarnished name behind him, he has my utter contempt; nor can I see how my love of my country obliges me to wish well to what I despise. Your Ladyship is more charitable, or more patriotic, or perhaps your sentiments may not be so rooted as mine, who do prefer the liberties of mankind to any local circumstances. Were I young and of heroic texture, I would go to America; as I am decrepit and have the bones of a sparrow, I must die on my perch; and when you turn courtier, I will peck my bread and water out of another hand.

For France I have no predilection for it; nor is my respect for it augmented. It does so little, it makes so poor a figure, that one would think Lord North was minister there as well as here. In truth, Madam, I have no platonic passions. I cannot love what I do not esteem. We have forfeited all titles to respect. I appeal to the unalterable nature of justice whether this war with America is a just one? If it is not, can an honest man wish success to it? and I appeal to posterity whether it can find in all our annals so disgraceful a period as the present. You, Madam, as a sound patriot, may wish that Admiral Darby with an inferiority of two-thirds had beaten the combined fleets; which he did not attempt to beat: but give me leave to say that you should

[3] Gibbon.

recur to your piety. Piety believes in miracles; miracles alone can counterpoise superior weight of metal, or counteract folly, which has thrown away the empire of the ocean. It is true, we have still the jaw-bone of an ass left; but somehow or other it has lost its wonder-working efficacy: but come, Madam, I will show that I can be impartial too. I do assure you I have not the smallest apprehension from Lord Cornwallis's victorious arms; and I do pray for the duration of the present ministry, for I am sure they will never conquer America, or anything else.

I had heard the story of Lady Sarah and the Prince, and know it is true. The spindle-tree I have,—paper enough I have not to reply to other articles in your Ladyship's letter. I beg your pardon for the length and tediousness of this, but I could not bear not to justify myself in your eyes; I have spoken the truth, I do not know whether with any success. My sentiments have always been the same, and I believe firmly will never alter.

2223. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 29, 1781.

I HAVE received a letter to-night from the younger Sir Horace, and answer it to both or either, for this reason: the courier may be detained here, like the last, for several days; in which case, nay, without that, the nephew will probably have left Florence before the courier gets back, as Mrs. Noel says the junior Sir is to be here by the meeting of Parliament. To him, if not set out, I must say, that nothing could be more unnecessary than an apology to me for not advertising me of his journey; and, having been so constantly kind to me, I was not in the least suspicious of his wanting any of his usual goodness for me. I must again quote Mrs. Noel, who, not having heard of his setting

out till some time after he was gone, concluded, from its being so late in the season, that he would not go at all. Had I had anything particular to send, I should certainly have informed myself more carefully. In good truth, I never am diffident of my friends, nor ever saw the smallest ground in Sir Horace for being so.

Now, my old correspondent, to you. I am charmed with the good account your nephew gives me of you. He says you have no complaint but a little trembling of your hand. I, who am so nervous that the sudden clapping of a door makes me shudder all over, call that nothing. I have lost the use of several joints of my fingers, and often fear I shall lose entirely the service of my right hand. Such alarms, amongst other reflections reconcile one to the parting with one's whole self;—but what everybody that has common sense must feel, it is idle to detail.

I must own, I do expect the loss of Minorca. It is true, nothing can be more bungling than our enemies. I have often thought, and, I believe, said to you, that Russia, Prussia, and Austria must look with infinite contempt on our western warfare. *They* divided a kingdom in fewer months than we have been years in fighting drawn battles. They give us room to make a kind of figure by letting us make head at all against France, Spain, Holland, and America. Yet I am not so sanguine as your nephew. I think it would be frenzy for our fleet to pass the Straits at this time of year for the relief of Minorca. Separated they are, I believe, the combined fleets; but when we did not venture to encounter them at the mouth of our *own* channel—that *was*! would it be wise to invite them to reassemble and impound us in the Mediterranean, or reduce us to fight our way against their superiority at the door of it? Clumsy as they are, I doubt they are not dull to that degree. Nay, I fear they do know that, even in this

dilatory way, they will ruin us by the expense we are at. I should have thought they might have done their business sooner, unless they look on our exhausting ourselves as more permanent destruction. Little as they have done for America, which shows how injudicious our perseverance has been, we are almost at the last gasp there, and tremble for Lord Cornwallis. I should not say so much as this but by your own courier; for I have too much *fierté* to allow to enemies even what they know. We have no particular news at present, and I will not make my letter longer than is necessary, as it is past midnight, and this must go to town early to-morrow morning.

I have heard lately a melancholy account of poor Mr. Morrice. I do not know that he is worse since he went to Bath, but Dr. Turton his physician, I am told, has a bad opinion of him. Still I do not rely entirely on that opinion. As he has strength of constitution enough left to fling out the gout lately in the extreme parts, it does not appear to me a desperate case. The Bath may give him more gout. Cav. Mozzi, I doubt, will be very impatient—but he cannot suspect any affected delay from Mr. Morrice, who by no means approves of the conduct and pursuit of the other side.

I have almost got through the first volume of the Medici. In spite of the beauty of the Italian language, the style appears very meagre. One must call it simplicity, if one would commend it. The sincerity is considerable enough to make the Medici shudder in their pompous tombs in St. Lorenzo. What a severe tyrant was their great Cosmo! Able, indeed! But how facile is address when it stops at nothing! Or is it *art* to stab and poison? Then assassins are great politicians. The work, to be sure, does unfold a horrid scene of popes and princes; but I don't know how—I don't know what I expected: all that scene of

villainous ambition is but cold at this distance of time; one is shocked, never interested. At least, the historian wanted ability to move the passions; or, perhaps, it was impossible to excite anything but horror, when he does not seem amidst all his materials to have discovered one good character.

The only person for whom I have conceived an esteem is for the sovereign himself who commanded the work. He must mean to be a good prince, when he enjoins the truth to be so amply told of his predecessors. He must be aware of the reflections that will be made hereafter, if he is not.

The Duchess of Gloucester has ordered me to thank you particularly for a very obliging letter that she has received from you: she does not say on what occasion. They are at Weymouth, and greatly happy at having lately inoculated Prince William as successfully as they could possibly wish. Adieu! dear Sir, or Sirs.

2224. To John Nichols.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 31, 1781.

I am glad to hear, Sir, that your account of Hogarth calls for another edition; and I am very sensible of your great civility in offering to change any passages that criticize my own work. Though I am much obliged by the offer, I should blush to myself if I even wished for that complaisance. Good God! Sir, what am I that I should be offended at or above criticism or correction? I do not know who ought to be—I am sure, no author. I am a private man, of no consequence, and at best an author of very moderate abilities. In a work that comprehends so

Letter 2224.—Incomplete in C.; now printed from original in possession of Mrs. Alfred Morrison.

much biography as my *Anecdotes of Painting*, it would have been impossible, even with much more diligence than I employed, not to make numberless mistakes. It is kind to me to point out those errors; to the world it is justice. Nor have I reason to be displeased even with the manner. I do remember that in many passages you have been very civil to me. I do not recollect any harsh phrases. As my work is partly critical as well as biographic, there too I had no reason or right to expect deference to my opinions. Criticism, I doubt, has no very certain rule to go by; in matters of taste it is a still more vague and arbitrary science.

As I am very sincere, Sir, in what I say, I will with the same ingenuity own, that in one or two places of your book I think the criticisms on me are not well founded. For instance, in p. 37 I am told that Hogarth did not deserve the compliment I pay him of not descending to the indelicacy of the Flemish and Dutch painters. It is very true that you have produced some instances to which I had not adverted, where he has been guilty of the same fault, though I think not in all you allege, nor to the degree alleged: in some I think the humour compensates for the indelicacy, which is never the case with the Dutch; and in one particularly I think it is a merit,—I mean in the burlesque 'Paul before Felix,'—for there, Sir, you should recollect that Hogarth himself meant to satirize, not to imitate, the painters of Holland and Flanders.

You have also instanced, Sir, many more portraits in his satiric prints than come within my defence of him as not being a personal satirist—but in those too, with submission, I think you have gone too far, as, though you have cited *portraits*, are they all satiric? Sir John Gonson[1] is the image of an active magistrate identified, but is not ridiculous, unless to be an active magistrate is being ridiculous.

[1] Chairman of the Westminster Quarter Sessions.

Mr. Pine[2], I think you allow, desired to sit for the fat friar in the 'Gates of Calais'—certainly not with a view to being turned into derision.

With regard to the *bloody fingers* of Sigismonda, you say, Sir, that my memory must have failed me, as you affirm that they *are* unstained with blood. Forgive me if I say, that I am positive they were so originally. I saw them so, and have often mentioned that fact. Recollect, Sir, that you yourself allow, p. 46, in the note, that the picture was continually *altered, upon the criticism of one connoisseur or another.* May not my memory be more faithful about so striking a circumstance than the memory of another who would engage to recollect all the changes that remarkable picture underwent?

I should be very happy, Sir, if I could contribute any additional lights to your new publication. Indeed, what additional lights I have gained are from your work, which has furnished me with many. I am going to publish a new edition of all the five volumes of my *Anecdotes of Painting,* in which I shall certainly insert what I have gathered from you. This edition will be in five thin octavos, without cuts, to make the purchase easy to artists and such as cannot afford the quartos, which are grown so extravagantly dear that I am ashamed of it. Being published too at different periods, and being many of them cut to pieces for the heads, since the rage for portraits has been carried so far, it is very rare to meet with a complete set. My corrected copy is now in the printer's hands, except the last volume, in which are my additions to Hogarth from your list, and perhaps one or two more; but that volume also I have left in town, though not at the printer's, as, to complete it, I must wait for his new works, which Mrs. Hogarth is to publish.

[2] John Pine (1690–1756), engraver, called 'Friar Pine' in consequence of Hogarth's portrait of him in that character.

When I am settled in town, which probably will be by the end of next month, Sir, I shall be very ready, if you please to call on me in Berkeley Square, to communicate any additions I have made to my account of Hogarth. One or two trifles I have inserted in the margin of your account, which I will now mention, though scarcely worth your adopting.

P. 84 of yours. It is impossible Henry the Eighth and Anne Boleyn could be meant for portraits of the late Prince and Miss Vane[3]. The stature and faces of both are totally unlike. You ask, Sir, where the picture is or was? It was at Vauxhall, in the portico of the old great room on the right hand as you enter the garden. I remember it there.

P. 147, last line. There never was a *Duke* of Kendal, but an infant son of James the Second. The arms engraved were certainly those of the *Duchess* of Kendal, and the same with those I have in a lozenge. It must have been a mistake, if written Duke, or in a male shield.

P. 148. The print of Monticelli, Cuzzoni, and Heydeggre, if etched by him, was not designed by him, but by the last Countess of Burlington; nor is it Monticelli, but Farinelli. Monticelli was not in England till many years after the Cuzzoni.

I do not at present recollect anything more that can be of use to you; and am, Sir,

Your obliged and obedient
Humble servant,
Hor. Walpole.

[3] Hon. Anne Vane (1705–1736), daughter of second Baron Barnard. She was the mistress of Frederick, Prince of Wales.

2225. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 6, 1781.

I believe I am very dull, or quite blinded by prejudice, for I confess I do not feel the force of your Ladyship's arguments. Are men in the right to take up arms in self-defence, and in the wrong to declare themselves independent? Is resistance *by force* a thing indifferent, and the declaration *in words* a crime? Methinks by that rule all who joined the Prince of Orange were justifiable, but ceased to be so the moment King James was dethroned. Thus men ought to offend a king but never to punish him! I believe their Majesties would agree to that compromise.

I can as little subscribe to the position that it is the duty of an officer to obey his king, whatever may be the officer's opinions. Were that maxim true, no conscientious man can accept a commission if it dissolves the obligation of his conscience. Those very loyal instruments, the bells of a parish church, do allow a precedence to God—fear God, honour the King; but I am talking politics and arguing—two things I do not love. I am almost afraid to tell you news on that subject, as I doubt your Ladyship is less and less likely to recover your share of sovereignty over America. Lord Graham[1] and Lord Sefton, who have been in town, tell me that the accounts brought by Colonel Conway[2] are very bad indeed. I did see him himself on Saturday at Ditton on his way to Windsor, but he was so discreet as to say nothing, but that what he brought was not very good: that the French have thirty-seven ships, and we twenty-three; that the former have landed 4,000 men, and evacuated

Letter 2225.—[1] James Graham (1755–1836), Marquis of Graham; only son of second Duke of Montrose, whom he succeeded in 1790.

[2] Col. Hon. Robert Conway, Aide-de-Camp to Sir Henry Clinton, who dispatched him to England to represent the desperate state of affairs in America.

Rhode Island, and taken *two* of our best frigates; the papers say *three*; but it is not true that two regiments have been cut to pieces, for the 45th, one of the named, is in England. He did say, that your friend, Lord Cornwallis, has the back country open to him, and he did not add, what Lord Sefton tells me is said, that he had provisions but for six weeks. We shall close, I believe and hope, Madam, in wishing an end to this destruction of the species, nor can the most loyal, I suppose, think that even the dependence of America was worth purchasing at the expense of thousands of lives, of forty millions of money, of the sovereignty of the sea, and of the loss of America itself. We were naturally tradesmen, and had better have borne a few affronts than asserted the point of honour at so dear a rate.

It is very far from true, Madam, that I write either prologue or epilogue to the *Count of Narbonne*. I could no more compose twenty verses than I could dance a hornpipe. My faculties are as *délabrées* as my limbs, and these are deplorable. My nerves are so shattered that the clapping of a door makes me tremble; and this poor hand that is writing to you has long lost the use of three of its joints, and I fear will quite desert me. I have now, and have had all the summer, the gout in the fourth finger. Thus my person is as antiquated as my political opinions!

I have not seen Mr. Selwyn for half a century. He has the mal à propos almost as strongly as the à propos. Others with more malice, say they perceive a likeness to *the* Lord William[3]. Miss Lloyd is full as like to Lady Sarah. Miss Bunbury has a great deal of the Lennoxes, not so handsome, but with a much prettier person than any of the females of the family.

Genealogist as I am, I cannot make out, Madam, how

[3] Lord William Gordon, with whom Lady Sarah Bunbury (as she then was) eloped in 1769.

Miss Sackville[4] is Lord Mansfield's niece. You say you do not entirely believe that his Lordship gave away his niece. *Cela me passe.* To weep at weddings I know is of ancient custom, as much as *double entendres*; a ceremonial, the former, of which I never knew the origin. The more and the longer a fashion prevails, the less sense there commonly is in it. Thence solutionists, like etymologists, seldom hit on the true foundation, both hunting for some meaning.

I recollect how prolix my last was; and though you are too civil to tell me, Madam, of that other symptom of my dotage, I am aware of it myself, and wish you good night.

2226. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 7, 1781.

If great countries ever owned a defeat or gazettes ever spoke truth, you would conclude by that of last night that the royalists in America have had shining and solid success under a person formerly called one Arnold, but who has plainly shown himself two Arnolds. This *Gazette* has been gleaned and new-boiled from amidst a heap of disasters that were brought over on Saturday by Colonel Conway express from Sir Henry Clinton, and which have transpired from other letters, or from the soap-boilers themselves. Two regiments even of the victorious expedition[1] under double Arnold have been cut to pieces by the Americans,—the latter, you know, never fight.

The town says, from various letters which came over on Saturday, too, but not one of which, to be sure, the *Gazette* has seen, that Lord Cornwallis is in a most desperate position, and had provisions but for a month, that we have

[4] Elizabeth, second daughter of Lord George Germaine; m. (Oct. 28, 1781) Henry Arthur Herbert, of Muckross, Killarney.

Letter 2226.—[1] Arnold had burnt New London in Connecticut and destroyed a quantity of stores.

lost two or three frigates, that the French have landed some thousand men, have been joined by eight men-of-war of the line, and are superior to our fleet by eleven or twelve ships. The stocks, who have not such command of countenance as the *Gazette*, are low-spirited.

This is all the hearsay I know. I came to town this morning to attend the rehearsal of Mr. Jephson's play, but I do not write prologue or epilogue, as the newspapers say; and shall return to Strawberry on Saturday.

I hope your commission was executed to your satisfaction. It was not my fault that it was not performed immediately.

When will your residence end? when do you return to your flocks, two-legged or four-legged? and when shall you leave them and come southward?

2227. To Robert Jephson.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 7, 1781.

Yesterday, Sir, I received the favour of your letter with the enclosed prologue, and am extremely pleased with it; not only as it omits mention of me, for which I give you my warmest thanks, but as a composition. The thoughts are just and happily expressed; and the conclusion is so lively and well conceived, that Mr. Harris, to whom I carried it this morning, thinks it will have great effect. We are very sorry you have not sent us an epilogue too; but, before I touch on that, I will be more regular in my details. Miss Younge has accepted the part very gracefully; and by a letter I have received from her, in answer to mine, will, I flatter myself, take care to do justice to it. Nay, she is so zealous, that Mr. Harris tells me she has taken great pains with the young person who is to play the daughter, but whose name I cannot at this moment recollect[1].

Letter 2227.—[1] Miss Satchell, married in 1783 to Stephen Kemble, a brother of Mrs. Siddons. She first appeared on the stage in 1780, and died in 1841.

I must now confess that I have been again alarmed. I had a message from Mr. Harris on Saturday last to tell me that the performers had been so alert, and were so ready with their parts, and the many disappointments that had happened this season had been so prejudicial to him, that it would be easy and necessary to bring out your play next Saturday the 10th, and desired to have the prologue and epilogue. This precipitation made me apprehend that justice would not be done to your tragedy. Still I did not dare to remonstrate; nor would venture to damp an ardour which I could not expect to excite again. Instead of objecting to his haste, I only said I had not received your prologue and epilogue, but had written for them and expected them every minute, though, as it depended on winds, one could never be sure. I trusted to accidents for delay; at least I thought I could contrive some, without seeming to combat what he thought for his interest.

I have not been mistaken. On receiving your prologue yesterday, I came to town to-day and carried it to him, to show him I lost no time. He told me Mr. Henderson was not enough recovered, but he hoped would be well enough to bring out the play on Saturday se'nnight; that he had had a rough rehearsal yesterday morning, with which he had been charmed; and was persuaded, and that the performers think so too, that your play will have great effect. All this made me very easy. There is to be a regular rehearsal on Saturday, for which I shall stay in town on purpose; and, if I find the performers perfect, I think there will be no objection to its appearance on Saturday se'nnight. I shall rather prefer that day to a later; as, the Parliament not being met, it will have a week's run before politics interfere.

Now, Sir, for the epilogue. I have taken the liberty of desiring Mr. Harris to have one prepared, in case yours

should not arrive in time. It is a compliment to him (I do not mean that he will write it himself), will interest him still more in the cause; and, though he may not procure a very good one, a manager may know better than we do what will suit the taste of the times. The success of a play being previous, cannot be hurt by an epilogue, though some plays have been saved; and if it be not a good one, it will not affect you. If you send us a good one, though too late, it may be printed with the play.

I must act about the impression just the reverse of what I did about the performance, and must beg you would commission some friend to transact that affair; for I know nothing of the terms, and should probably disserve you if I undertook the treaty with the booksellers, nor should I have time to supervise the correction of the press. In truth, it is so disagreeable a business, that I doubt I have given proofs at my own press of being too negligent; and as I am actually at present reprinting my *Anecdotes of Painting*, I have but too much business of that sort on my hands. You will forgive my saying this, especially when you consider that my hands are very lame, and that this morning in Mr. Harris's room, the right one shook so, that I was forced to desire him to write a memorandum for me.

I think I have omitted nothing material. Mr. Wroughton[2] is to play the Count. I do not know who will speak the prologue; probably not Mr. Henderson, as he has been so very ill: nor should I be very earnest for it; for the Friar's is so capital and so laborious a part, that I should not wish to abate his powers by any previous exertion. Perhaps I refine too much, but I own I think the non-appearance of a principal actor till his part opens is an advantage.

I will only add that I must beg you will not talk of

[2] Richard Wroughton (1748–1822).

obligations to me. You have at least overpaid me *d'avance* by the honour you have done me in adopting *The Castle of Otranto*.

2228. To Robert Jephson.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 10, 1781.

As I have been at the rehearsal of your tragedy to-day, Sir, I must give you a short account of it; though I am little able to write, having a good deal of gout in my right hand, which would have kept me away from anything else, and make me hurry back hither the moment it was over, lest I should be confined to town. Mr. Malone[1], perhaps, who was at the play-house too, may have anticipated me; for I could not save the post to-night, nor will this go till to-morrow.

Mr. Henderson is still too ill to attend, but hopes to be abroad by Tuesday: Mr. Hull[2] read his part very well. Miss Younge is perfectly mistress of her part, is pleased with it, and I think will do it justice. I never saw her play so ably. Miss Satchell, who is to play Adelaide, is exactly what she should be: very young, pretty enough, natural and simple. She has already acted Juliet with success. Her voice is not only pleasing, but very audible; and, which is much more rare, very articulate: she does not gabble, as most young women do, even off the stage. Mr. Wroughton much exceeded my expectation. He enters warmly into his part, and with thorough zeal. Mr. Lewis was so very imperfect in his part, that I cannot judge quite what he will do, for he could not repeat two lines by heart; but he looked haughtily, and as he pleased me in *Percy*,

Letter 2228.—[1] Edmond Malone (1741–1812), the critic; he wrote an epilogue to *The Count of Narbonne*.

[2] Thomas Hull (1728–1808), actor and dramatist.

which is the same kind of character, I promise myself he will succeed in this.

Very, very few lines will be omitted; and there will be one or two verbal alterations to accommodate the disposition, but which will not appear in the printed copies, of which Mr. Malone says he will take the management. As Mr. Harris and the players all seemed zealous and in good humour, I would not contest some trifles; and, indeed, they were not at all unreasonable. I am to see the scenes on Friday, if I am able; and if Mr. Henderson is well enough, the play will be performed on the 17th or immediately after. Some slight delays, which one cannot foresee, may always happen. In truth, I little expected so much readiness and compliance both in manager and actors; nor, from all I have heard of the stage, could conceive such facilities. From the moment Mr. Harris consented to perform your play, there has not been one instance of obstinacy or wrongheadedness anywhere. If the audience is as reasonable and just, you may, Sir, promise yourself complete success.

2229. To the Hon. Thomas Walpole.

Nov. 11, 1781.

I have seldom in my life been so delightfully surprised as I was on Wednesday last by a visit from your son. It is not to reproach your silence, dear Sir, for I allowed for the numerous reasons that might occasion it. But I own I was very unhappy at it, and feared you did not know how cordially and sincerely I took part in your cares. The Duke of Richmond told me Madame de Cambis had mentioned the decree in your favour[1]; but hearing no more of

Letter 2229.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 61–4.

[1] Thomas Walpole had won his lawsuit, but in carrying it on had

it, nor being able to learn the truth, I did fear it was not so propitious as your son tells me. I do most heartily congratulate you and your family, and believe few but they have more real pleasure in your good fortune. Your son speaks modestly of it, as he does of everything: but Mr. Suckling, whom I saw yesterday, was much more sanguine, and made me hope such a re-establishment as I wish. Do not talk of philosophy. You have such very meritorious children, and have so much courage yourself, that I hope you will again be active, and make them as considerable as they ought and deserve to be. For your son, if my affection is any present, he is very worthy of it. Nothing can be more insipid than my life, but, whenever he will partake of it, he will make me happy, and as often and for as long as he pleases, though a lame old man is poor company.

You are sensible I can tell you nothing but what every one knows; nor is it pleasant to write that, if one speaks truth. Nor is France the spot to which I would send what I think.

I have received all the papers of my old friend that I ever shall receive. I will tire you no more on that subject, though I hear you have not more reason to be pleased than I am with certain persons.

As I hear you see Madame de Guerchy sometimes, I beg my sincere respects to her, and to the Duchesse de la Valière *du Carrousel*, if her you should see too. Those two ladies have always been equally and constantly good to me. There is another, whom I will not name, who, I own, has surprised me[2]. But I will remember the kindness, and forget the neglect.

lost his whole fortune. He was obliged to appeal to the Governors of the Bank of England (who had had claims upon him which he had satisfied) for an allowance for himself and his children. His appeal was printed at Strawberry Hill. (See prefatory note to *Unpublished Letters* as above.)

[2] Probably the Duchesse de Choiseul.

Your niece, Mrs. Walpole, is breeding. There was a time when I should have thought that a felicity!

Sir Edward has bought a house at Isleworth, has been there three months, nay has been there twice, and made a few other visits. He is amazingly well, and better for the air; nay, it gave him a little gout in his foot for two or three days.

Tonton is perfectly well, and does not bite anybody once in a month. I imitate George Selwyn about Mimy, and do not try to convert him, but let him go to mass every Sunday. Perhaps that may not be a great merit in France. Perhaps it is a greater merit here.

Old Lord George Cavendish comes into Parliament again in the room of his nephew, Lord Richard, to prevent a contest in Derbyshire. Lord Richard, I suppose you know, left what money he had to his sister[3].

Lord De Spencer and Lord Falmouth are past recovery. Lord Aylesford marries Miss Thynne[4], or rather her father, for I fancy Bacchus will be better served than Venus.

Adieu! my dear Sir. Do not write but when you like it: I shall have the pleasure of hearing of you from your son, and in the present situation of things our correspondence is too much *gênée* to afford us much satisfaction.

2230. To Robert Jephson.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 13, 1781.

I HAVE this minute, Sir, received the corrected copy of your tragedy, which is almost all I am able to say, for I have so much gout in this hand, and it shakes so much, that I am scarce able to manage my pen. I will go to town if I can,

[3] The Duchess of Portland.

[4] Hon. Louisa Thynne (d. 1797), eldest daughter of third Viscount Weymouth (afterwards Marquis of Bath); m. (Nov. 19, 1781) Heneage Finch, fourth Earl of Aylesford.

and consult Mr. Henderson on the alterations; though I confess I think it dangerous to propose them so late before representation, which the papers say again is to be on Saturday if Mr. Henderson is well enough. Mr. Malone shall have the corrected copy for impression.

I own I cannot suspect that Mr. Sheridan will employ any ungenerous arts against your play. I have never heard anything to give me suspicions of his behaving unhandsomely; and as you indulge my zeal and age a liberty of speaking like a friend, I would beg you to suppress your sense of the too great prerogatives of theatric monarchs. I hope you will again and again have occasion to court the power of their crowns; and therefore, if not for your own, for the sake of the public do not declare war with them. It has not been my practice to preach slavery; but, while one deals with and depends on mimic sovereigns, I would *act* policy, especially when by temporary passive obedience one can really lay a lasting obligation on one's country, which your plays really are.

I am glad you approve what I had previously undertaken, Mr. Harris's procuring an epilogue; he told me on Saturday that he should have one. You are very happy in friends, Sir; which is another proof of your merit. Mr. Malone is not less zealous than Mr. Tighe, to whom I beg my compliments.

2231. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 13, 1781.

I try to answer your letter, though my hand shakes so it is very difficult. I have had the gout in my right these three months; the fourth finger has discharged a shower of chalk-stones which makes me as a genealogist, no otherwise I protest to your priesthood, conclude that I am descended from Deucalion rather than Adam, unless there has been

any intermarriage between the two families. A new swelling has come within this week and must be lanced soon, and being very nervous too, any effort in writing makes my hand reel more, but I must thank you for your *Primiera* about the picture of Drayton, though I do not choose to purchase it. I have no room to stick a single head; I am poor, too, and am grown so old that every acquisition seems much dearer to me from the little time I have to enjoy it. Shall I own farther? I do not think all Drayton ever wrote worth five guineas; Dr. Johnson perhaps may have installed him in Milton's throne, and the age may have sworn fealty to him; but I am a Tory, and adhere to the right line, and will not abjure those I learnt to revere in my nursery, nor will kneel to stocks and stones that the mob are taught to idolize.

I am, too, though a Goth, so modern a Goth that I hate the black letter[1], and I love Chaucer better in Dryden and Baskerville than in his own language and dress; still my antiquarianility is much obliged to your pimping for it, but the anility-half predominates and will not pay for such a spark as Drayton, who is neither young nor vigorous.

Though very unfit for anything at present, and when I say at *present* do not imagine I expect to grow fitter for anything, I am occupied about Mr. Jephson's play, have been at one rehearsal, and must, if I can, be at another on Friday. The players, I believe, thought I was come to act the ghost of the miscarriage in *The What-d'ye-call-it*; perhaps it may prove so by venturing with the gout into a cold theatre, and then I shall say to them with propriety, 'I owe my death to you! to you! to you!' I could entertain you, were my hand able, with the history of my negotiations with Mr. Harris, Miss Younge, and how all my

Letter 2231.—[1] Mason offered Walpole a black-letter Chaucer of the first edition for one guinea.

finesse was nearly *déroutée* by an Irish head, but I am tired, and must wish you good night.

2232. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 15, 1781.

I don't know whether I shall be able to go through a letter, Madam, for I have a new swelling on one of my fingers, which must be lanced, and my hand trembles so much that I often cannot write a line. In this uneasy situation I am again come to town to attend a rehearsal. This play, I confess, plagues me a good deal, for our Lord's ecliptic countrymen undo as fast as I do. The manager was going to hurry on the performance last Saturday, before actors, scenes, or anything was ripe. I trusted to accidents and bore that haste. I had no sooner done so, than one of your Milesians took fire and wrote an angry letter to Mr. Harris, in resentment of the precipitation. Well! that quarrel I made up. To-day, after I had begged Mr. Harris to procure an epilogue, and he had got one, Mr. Jephson had written to this Mr. O'Quarrel, who is a poet too, to write one, and so he has; and now, on Thursday night, with the play to come forth on Saturday, we don't know which is to be preferred. I am to be at the theatre to-morrow by eleven, and Lord knows what will happen! I will tire your Ladyship no more with my grievances, but will take care how I promise and vow for a play again. I want to be quiet in my own Strawberry again—indeed I am fit to be nowhere else, and have a great mind to fix there.

I heard a great deal of French news t'other day by one just come from Paris. I don't answer for one syllable being true. My historian says the Queen seemed to be resolved, *à la Marie d'Este*, that her babe should be a

dauphin. Her reckoning and her person shifted backwards and forwards, and the last time having put off her delivery for a fortnight, and sent the King to hunt, he was fetched back in a quarter of an hour to see a son[1]. Then there is a delightful episode of a Mademoiselle Diane de Polignac, a friend of the favourite Duchess[2], who was dame to Madame Elizabeth, and who was so very pious, and had so bemethodized her mistress, that they feared the Princess would follow her aunt Louise into a convent, and they would have dismissed the saint, if the Queen would have consented, and if the saint herself had not, one *beau matin*, had the misfortune to have a little one. For fear of any more virgin-mothers, the Queen and the Duchess have produced an old Madame Dandelot[3], who was exiled in the last reign for having taken a very different way to convert Madame Adelaide, by lending her a strange book, of which I protest I know the name no more than your Ladyship. One anecdote more, and I will not ask my hand to say a word more. The Comte d'Artois carried his eldest boy, the Comte d'Angoulême[4], to see the dauphin. The child said, 'Il est bien petit.' The Prince replied, 'Patience, mon enfant, vous le trouverez bientôt trop grand.'

I don't know whether your Ladyship can read all this tittle-tattle; it does not signify if you do not. I know nothing else, nor could write more if I did. Soon, mayhap, I must write upon a slate; it will only be scraping my fingers to a point, and they will serve for a chalk pencil.

LETTER 2232.—[1] The Dauphin Louis Joseph Xavier François; d. 1789.

[2] Yolande Martine Gabrielle de Polastron (d. 1793), Duchesse de Polignac. She was the favourite of Marie Antoinette, who heaped all kinds of honours on her and on her family. She was one of the first to abandon the Queen on the outbreak of the Revolution.

[3] The Comtesse d'Andlau, aunt of the Duchesse de Polignac.

[4] Louis Antoine (1775–1844), Duc d'Angoulême, eldest son of the Comte d'Artois.

Friday.

I have been at the theatre, and compromised the affair of the epilogues: one is to be spoken to-morrow, the friend's on the author's night. I have been tumbling into trap-doors, seeing dresses tried on in the green-room, and directing armour in the painting-room, and all this with such a throbbing hand that I was tempted to rest myself in Covent Garden churchyard, and bilk both the great stage and the little one.

2233. To Robert Jephson.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 18, 1781.

As Mr. Malone undertook to give you an account, Sir, by last night's post, of the great success of your tragedy, I did not hasten home to write; but stayed at the theatre, to talk to Mr. Harris and the actors, and learn what was said, besides the general applause. Indeed I never saw a more unprejudiced audience, nor more attention. There was not the slightest symptom of disapprobation to any part, and the plaudit was great and long when given out again for Monday. I mention these circumstances in justification of Mr. Sheridan, to whom I never spoke in my life, but who certainly had not sent a single person to hurt you. The prologue was exceedingly liked; and, for effect, no play ever produced more tears. In the green-room I found that Hortensia's sudden death was the only incident disapproved, as we heard by intelligence from the pit; and it is to be deliberated to-morrow whether it may not be preferable to carry her off as if only in a swoon. When there is only so slight an objection, you cannot doubt of your full success. It is impossible to say how much justice Miss Younge did to your writing. She has shown herself a great mistress of her profession, mistress of dignity, passion, and of all the

sentiments you have put into her hands. The applause given to her description of Raymond's death lasted some minutes, and recommenced; and her scene in the fourth act, after the Count's ill-usage, was played in the highest perfection. Mr. Henderson was far better than I expected from his weakness, and from his rehearsal yesterday, with which he was much discontented himself. Mr. Wroughton was very animated, and played the part of the Count much better than any man now on the stage would have done. I wish I could say Mr. Lewis satisfied me; and that poor child Miss Satchell was very inferior to what she appeared at the rehearsals, where the total silence and our nearness deceived us. Her voice has no strength, nor is she yet at all mistress of the stage. I have begged Miss Younge to try what she can do with her by Monday. However, there is no danger to your play: it is fully established. I confess I am not only pleased on your account, Sir, but on Mr. Harris's, as he has been so very obliging to me. I am not likely to have any more intercourse with the stage; but I shall be happy if I leave my interlude there by settling an amity between you and Mr. Harris, whence I hope he will draw profit and you more renown.

2234. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Berkeley Square, Sunday morning, Nov. 18, 1781.

I have been here again for three days, tending and nursing and waiting on Mr. Jephson's play. I have brought it into the world, was well delivered of it, it can stand on its own legs—and I am going back to my own quiet hill, never likely to have anything more to do with theatres. Indeed it has seemed strange to me, who for these three or four years have not been so many times in a play-house, nor knew six of the actors by sight, to be at two rehearsals,

behind the scenes, in the green-room, and acquainted with half the company. *The Count of Narbonne* was played last night with great applause, and without a single murmur of disapprobation. Miss Younge has charmed me. She played with intelligence that was quite surprising. The applause to one of her speeches lasted a minute, and recommenced twice before the play could go on. I am sure you will be pleased with the conduct and the easy beautiful language of the play, and struck with her acting.

2235. To Robert Jephson.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 21, 1781.

I have just received your two letters, Sir, and the epilogue, which I am sorry came so late, as there are very pretty things in it: but I believe it would be very improper to produce it now, as the two others have been spoken.

I am sorry you are discontent with there being no standing figure of Alphonso, and that I acquiesced in its being cumbent. I did certainly yield, and I think my reasons will justify me. In the first place, you seemed to have made a distinction between the statue and the tomb; and had both been represented, they would have made a confusion. But a more urgent reason for my compliance was the shortness of the time, which did not allow the preparation of an entire new scene, as I proposed last year and this, nay, and mentioned it to Mr. Harris. When I came to the house to see the scene prepared, it was utterly impossible to adjust an erect figure to it; nor, indeed, do I conceive, were the scene disposed as you recommend, how Adelaide could be stabbed behind the scenes. As I never disguise the truth, I must own,—for I did think myself so much obliged to Mr. Harris,—that I was unwilling to heap difficulties on him, when I did not think

they would hurt your piece. I fortunately was not mistaken: the entrance of Adelaide wounded had the utmost effect, and I believe much greater than would have resulted from her being stabbed on the stage. In short, the success has been so complete, and both your poetry and the conduct of the tragedy are so much and so justly admired, that I flatter myself you will not blame me for what has not produced the smallest inconvenience. Both the manager and the actors were tractable, I believe, beyond example; and it is my nature to bear some contradiction, when it will carry material points. The very morning, the only morning I had to settle the disposition, I had another difficulty to reconcile—the competition of the two epilogues, which I was so lucky as to compromise too. I will say nothing of my being three hours each time, on two several days, in a cold theatre with the gout on me; and perhaps it was too natural to give up a few points in order to get home, for which I ask your pardon. Yet the event shows that I have not injured you; and if I was in one instance impatient, I flatter myself that my solicitations to Mr. Harris and Miss Younge, and the zeal I have shown to serve you, will atone for my having in one moment thought of myself, and then only when the reasons that weighed with me were so plausible, that without a totally new scene, which the time would not allow, I do not see how they could have been obviated. Your tragedy, Sir, has taken such a rank upon the stage, that one may reasonably hope it will hereafter be represented with all the decorations to your mind; and I admire it so truly, that I shall be glad to have it conducted by an abler mechanist than your obedient humble servant.

2236. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 22, 1781.

I am angry with myself, Madam, for having dropped a word that gave you any concern; nor shall I forgive my guilty self, though it has produced such new proof of your Ladyship's goodness. I have not suffered at all by my campaign at the theatre, but *like weeds that escape the scythe*, I do not catch cold where a giant would. It is true I am so nervous, that the least surprise or sudden noise agitates me from head to foot; but I will not say a word more on my debility. An aspen leaf can give an oak no idea of its sensations—and why should it? I have such a dread of seeming not to be apprised of my antiquity and decay, that very likely I carry it to affectation, for it is difficult to keep to the medium of simplicity and common sense, on any occasion. Having therefore put in my caveat against being suspected of any imaginary robustness, you shall hear no more of any cracks that happened to the premises.

After all my pains Mr. Jephson is not quite satisfied. Though I had begged him (and he had promised) not to communicate to his Irish friends the approaching exhibition of his tragedy, he had, as I told your Ladyship, written to one of them here, who, as I told you too, quarrelled with Mr. Harris, and then, I believe, with me, about his epilogue. To punish me, he wrote to Mr. Jephson that I had given up a material point of the decoration of the last scene, and had consented that the statue of Alphonso should be cumbent, though Mr. Jephson had called it *standing*—which, by the way, was wrong. The truth was, we had not time to remedy that contradiction, unless by altering the word, which Mr. Friend would not allow, nor could we have placed an erect statue in the scene prepared—and if we could, it would have spoiled the great effect of the last

scene. In short, Mr. Jephson has written me a pressing letter to amend that disposition, when it is too late. Well! I am content with having brought so beautiful a play on the stage; and, as it is never too late to learn, I will take care how I undertake such an office another time.

My sage nephew, Lord Orford, is, I hear, drawing up a code of laws—for coursing; for the use of her Imperial Majesty of Russia—a fitter code, indeed, for a despot, than a general system of legislation. I hope Diderot and D'Alembert will celebrate her humanity in not allowing poor hares to be hunted to death, but according to law. You see, Madam, she has sent her son to travel; shall you be prodigiously surprised if he was to die suddenly by eating ice when he was over-heated?

2237. To Edmond Malone.

Sir, Strawberry Hill, Nov. 23, 1781.

I have just received the honour of your letter, and do not lose a minute to answer it, though my hand is so nervous and shaking so much, that I have difficulty to write.

If you remember, Sir, Mr. Harris sent for me out of the box on the first night. I found Dr. Francklin[1] in the green-room, and some of the players. The former was just come out of the pit, and said the audience there disliked the death of Hortensia, and thought it most unnatural that she should die so suddenly of grief. The actors, too, agreed with him, and it was proposed that she should be carried off, to leave it at least doubtful whether she was dead or not.

Letter 2237.—Not in C.; reprinted from Prior's *Life of Malone*, p. 83.

[1] Thomas Francklin, D.D. (1721–1784), Rector of Brasted, Kent, and sometime Professor of Greek at Cambridge. He wrote plays and published translations from the classics.

I am sure I have never taken the liberty of making any alterations in Mr. Jephson's excellent tragedy. It is as true that I have not set up my own judgement against those who have, and must have, more knowledge of stage effect; and whenever I have acquiesced with them, it has been with the sole view of serving and contributing to the success of the play, or with the view of contenting Mr. Harris in little points, who had so readily consented to bring out the play. I flatter myself, too, that it has not suffered by those little compliances of mine.

It is likewise true, Sir, and I have no objection to Mr. Jephson's knowing, that I approve the alterations you have made, and which you do me the honour of proposing to me, to be inserted in the printed copy; but I fear I am not at liberty to agree to that idea, as, since I saw you, I have received another letter from Mr. Jephson, in which he desires me to deliver the last copy to you, Sir, which I had done, and adds these words, 'that he (Mr. Malone) may be requested not to suffer any alteration of the text, excepting as to printing, which he understands better than I do.' I confess I think Mr. Jephson too tenacious. He has produced such a treasure of beauties, that he could spare one or two. My frankness and sincerity, Sir, speak this from the heart, and not in secret. I would not for the world say one thing to you and another to Mr. Jephson; and, therefore, have no objection to your communicating my letter to him. You have shown yourself so zealous a friend to him, and I hope have found me so too, that I am sure you will understand what I say as it is meant, and not as flattering to either, or as double dealing, of which I trust I am incapable.

I read with pleasure in the papers, Sir, that your epilogue succeeded as it deserved; but I am much surprised at what you tell me, that the audiences have been less numerous

than there was every reason to expect. If any burlesque of what is ridiculous can erase taste for genuine poetry, the age should go a little further and admire only what is ridiculous.

I am much obliged to you, Sir, for the notices you are pleased to send me, which I shall certainly insert in my own trifling works.

Voltaire's letter to me was printed in one of the later miscellaneous volumes; I do not recollect in which. I do not doubt but that it will be reproduced in the general edition preparing. Hereafter, perhaps, another letter of his may appear, in which that envious depreciator of Shakespeare and Corneille may be proved to have been as mean and dirty as he was envious. I have the honour to be, Sir, with great respect,

Your most obedient humble servant,

Hor. Walpole.

2238. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 26, 1781.

Your letter of the 10th, which I have received to-night, has been very cordial to me, as Mrs. Noel and I have been very uneasy at not seeing your nephew, who used to have the two qualities of punctuality and flying; but I see he cannot execute the latter when his wings are wetted. I left Twickenham this morning; but, though the Duchess of Montrose and Mrs. Noel are to come to town on Wednesday, I shall send a line to the latter, to let her know the accidents your nephew experienced at setting out.

I am delighted that Mrs. Damer and you are delighted with each other. I know it mutually, for Lady Aylesbury received a letter this evening from Lady William Campbell, who told her so. Thank you a million of times for your

kindness to them. If you have time to know Mrs. Damer, what will you not think of her? But I must turn to a subject that will not be so pleasing to you.

An account came yesterday that could not but be expected, that Washington and the French have made Lord Cornwallis and his whole army prisoners[1]. I do not know what others think, but to me it seems fortunate that they were not all cut to pieces. It is not heroic perhaps, but I am glad that this disaster arriving before our fleet[2] reached the Chesapeak, it turned back to New York without attacking the French fleet, who are above three to two, thirty-seven to twenty-three. This is all I know yet; and yet this comes at an untoward moment; for the Parliament meets to-morrow, and it puts the Speech and speeches a little into disorder.

I cannot put on the face of the day, and act grief. Whatever puts an end to the American war will save the lives of thousands—millions of money too. If glory compensates such sacrifices, I have never heard that disgraces and disappointments were palliatives; but I will not descant, nor is it right to vaunt of having been in the right when one's country's shame is the solution of one's prophecy, nor would one join in the triumph of her enemies. Details you will hear from France sooner than I can send them; but I will write again the moment I know anything material. I am sorry your nephew is not arrived; who, by being in Parliament and in the world, would be sooner and better informed than I, who stir little out of my own house, and have no political connections, nor scarce a wish but to die in peace.

LETTER 2238.—[1] On Oct. 19, 1781, Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown to the combined forces of Washington, Rochambeau, and La Fayette.

[2] Clinton embarked from New York with 7,000 men to try and relieve Cornwallis, but returned to New York on hearing of the capitulation.

2239. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 26, 1781, late at night.

I came to town to-day at two o'clock, and found the town in a hubbub on the news of Lord Cornwallis and his whole army being made prisoners; but the Speech and two majorities to-morrow will send them all easy again to the opera by night.

I cannot tell you a word more of this mishap than Mr. Stonhewer has told you, whom I met this evening at Lady Cecilia's[1], and who has written to you. Mr. Macpherson, who publishes our daily creed, has been proclaiming that Lord Cornwallis has vowed he would never pile up his arms like Burgoyne. I do not know whether this was to keep up our spirits or not, but it puts the hero in a ridiculous light, which is the way in which heroes are treated of late, when they can be no longer of use; it saves rewards.

I have heard nothing else, nor was this repetition worth sending, but it proves I am not negligent.

I have been plagued about Mr. Jephson's play—nay, I am so still, for though I did prevail on Mr. Harris to act it, who had been ill-used about it, and on Miss Younge to play the mother, which she has done to admiration; and though it has succeeded perfectly, the author is dissatisfied. I had four sides last week, and to-night another letter of eight pages, to scold me for letting the statue on the tomb be cumbent instead of erect. In short, I do not wonder he is a poet, for he is distracted: he shall act his next play himself for me.

When you come to town I can show you a thousand curious things, from Madame du Deffand's papers, but I believe I did mention them before. When one repeats oneself, it is plain one grows old, or has nothing to say.

Letter 2239.—[1] Lady Cecilia Johnston.

2240. To the Earl of Strafford.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 27, 1781.

Each fresh mark of your Lordship's kindness and friendship calls on me for thanks and an answer: every other reason would enjoin me silence. I not only grow so old, but the symptoms of age increase so fast, that, as they advise me to keep out of the world, that retirement makes me less fit to be informing or entertaining. The philosophers who have sported on the verge of the tomb, or they who have *affected* to sport in the same situation, both tacitly implied that it was not out of their thoughts; and however dear what we are going to leave may be, all that is not particularly dear must cease to interest us much. If those reflections blend themselves with our gayest thoughts, must not their hue grow more dusky when public misfortunes and disgrace cast a general shade? The age, it is true, soon emerges out of every gloom, and wantons as before. But does not that levity imprint a still deeper melancholy on those who do think? Have any of our calamities corrected us? Are we not revelling on the brink of the precipice? Does administration grow more sage, or desire that we should grow more sober? Are these themes for letters, my dear Lord? Can one repeat common news with indifference, while our shame is writing for future history by the pens of all our numerous enemies? When did England see two whole armies lay down their arms and surrender themselves prisoners? Can venal addresses efface such stigmas, that will be recorded in every country in Europe? Or will such disgraces have no consequences? Is not America lost to us? Shall we offer up more human victims to the demon of obstinacy; and shall we tax ourselves deeper to furnish out the sacrifice? These are thoughts I cannot stifle at the

moment that enforces them; and though I do not doubt but the same spirit of dissipation that has swallowed up all our principles will reign again in three days with its wonted sovereignty, I had rather be silent than vent my indignation.—Yet I cannot talk, for I cannot think, on any other subject. It was not six days ago that, in the height of four raging wars, I saw in the papers an account of the Opera and of the dresses of the company; and thence the town, and thence of course the whole nation, were informed that Mr. Fitzpatrick had very little powder in his hair.

Would not one think that our newspapers were penned by boys just come from school for the information of their sisters and cousins? Had we had *Gazettes* and *Morning Posts* in those days, would they have been filled with such tittle-tattle after the battle of Agincourt, or in the more resembling weeks after the battle of Naseby? Did the French trifle equally even during the ridiculous war of the Fronde? If they were as impertinent then, at least they had wit in their levity. We are monkeys in conduct, and as clumsy as bears when we try to gambol. Oh, my Lord! I have no patience with my country! and shall leave it without regret!—Can we be proud when all Europe scorns us? It was wont to envy us, sometimes to hate us, but never despised us before. James the First was contemptible, but he did not lose an America! His eldest grandson sold us, his younger lost us—but we kept ourselves. Now we have run to meet the ruin—and it is coming!

I beg your Lordship's pardon if I have said too much—but I do not believe I have. You have never sold yourself, and therefore have not been accessory to our destruction. You must be happy *now*[1] not to have a son, who would live

LETTER 2240.—[1] Lady Louisa Stuart, in her *Account of John Duke of Argyll and his Family*, writes of Lord and Lady Strafford that 'both of them bitterly deplored their ill-fate in being childless; both (she more especially) felt the want of objects deeply interesting the heart.'

to grovel in the dregs of England. Your Lordship has long been so wise as to secede from the follies of your countrymen. May you and Lady Strafford long enjoy the tranquillity that has been your option even in better days!—and may you amuse yourself without giving loose to such reflections as have overflowed in this letter from your devoted humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2241. To the Rev. William Mason.

Nov. 28, 1781.

You may be unused to horrors, yet if you have read the 10th article of Lord Cornwallis's capitulation, your feelings will bleed afresh. He capitulates for his own person and return; he capitulates for his garrison; but lest the loyal Americans who had followed him should be included in that indemnity, he demands that they should not be *punished* —is refused—and leaves them to be hanged! Now his burning towns, &c., becomes a mere wantonness of war: they were the towns of those whom he calls rebels, though he was one of five who protested against the Stamp Act—but these were his friends, his fellow soldiers! Could I fill three pages more with news I would not—what article could deserve to be coupled with so abominable[1] a deed!

LETTER 2241.—[1] The facts were as follows:—'Cornwallis . . . was honourably anxious to protect from harm the native loyalists within his lines; and he proposed as the tenth article, that no such men were "to be punished on account of having joined the British army." Washington wrote in reply: "This article cannot be assented to, being altogether of civil resort." Means were found, however, with Washington's connivance, to obtain the same object in another form. It was stipulated, that, immediately after the capitulation, the *Bonetta* sloop of war was to sail for New York unsearched, with dispatches from Lord Cornwallis to Sir Henry Clinton, and with as many soldiers on board as he should think fit to send; provided only that the vessel were returned, and that the soldiers were accounted for as prisoners in a future exchange.' (Stanhope, *History of England*, ed. 1853-4, vol. vii. pp. 121-2.)

2242. To Sir Horace Mann.

Nov. 29, 1781.

Your nephew is arrived, as he has told you himself; the sight of him, for he called on me the next morning, was more than ordinarily welcome, though your letter of the 10th, which I received the night before, had dispelled many of my fears. I will now unfold them to you. A packet-boat from Ostend was lost last week, and your nephew was named for one of the passengers. As Mrs. Noel had expected him for a fortnight, I own my apprehensions were strengthened; but I will say no more on a dissipated panic. However, this incident and his half-wreck at Lerici[1] will, I hope, prevent him for the future from staying with you so late in the year; and I see by your letter that you agree with me, of which I should be sure though you had not said so.

I mentioned on Tuesday the captivity of Lord Cornwallis and his army, the Columbus who was to bestow America on us again. A second army taken in a drag-net is an uncommon event, and happened but once[2] to the Romans, who sought adventures everywhere. We have not lowered our tone on this new disgrace, though I think we shall talk no more of insisting on *implicit submission*, which would rather be a gasconade than firmness. In fact, there is one very unlucky circumstance already come out, which must drive every American, to a man, from even *calling* himself our friend. By the tenth article of the capitulation, Lord Cornwallis demanded that the loyal Americans in his army should not be punished. This was flatly refused, and he

Letter 2242.—[1] On the Gulf of Spezia.

[2] At the Caudine Forks, where, in B.C. 321, the Roman army surrendered to the Samnites.

has left them to be hanged. I doubt no vote of Parliament will be able to blanch such a—such a—I don't know what the word is for it; he must get his uncle the Archbishop [3] to christen it; there is no name for it in any pagan vocabulary. I suppose it will have a patent for being called necessity. Well! there ends another volume of the American war. It looks a little as if the history of it would be all we should have for it, except forty millions of debt, and three other wars that have grown out of it, and that do not seem so near to a conclusion. They say that Monsieur de Maurepas, who is dying, being told that the Duc de Lauzun had brought the news of Lord Cornwallis's surrender, said, from Racine's *Mithridate* I think:—

Mes derniers regards ont vu fuir les Romains.

How Lord Chatham will frown when they meet! for, since I began my letter, our papers say that Maurepas is dead. The Duc de Nivernois, it is said, is likely to succeed him as minister; which is probable, as they were brothers-in-law and friends, and the one would naturally recommend the other. Perhaps, not for long, as the Queen's influence gains ground.

The warmth in the House of Commons is prodigiously rekindled; but Lord Cornwallis's fate has cost the administration no ground *there.* The two names of most *éclat* in the opposition are two names to which those walls have been much accustomed at the same period—Charles Fox and William Pitt, second son of Lord Chatham. Eloquence is the only one of our brilliant qualities that does not seem to have degenerated rapidly—but I shall leave debates to your nephew, now an ear-witness: I could only re-echo newspapers. Is it not another odd coincidence of events, that while the father Laurens is prisoner to Lord Cornwallis

[3] Cornwallis, Archbishop of Canterbury.

as Constable of the Tower, the son Laurens signed the capitulation by which Lord Cornwallis became prisoner? It is said too, I don't know if truly, that this capitulation and that of Saratoga were signed on the same anniversary[4]. These are certainly the speculations of an idle man, and the more trifling when one considers the moment. But alas! what would *my* most grave speculations avail? From the hour that fatal egg, the Stamp Act, was laid, I disliked it and all the vipers hatched from it. I now hear many curse it, who fed the vermin with poisonous weeds. Yet the guilty and the innocent rue it equally!—hitherto, I would not answer for what is to come! Seven years of miscarriages may sour the sweetest tempers, and the most sweetened. Oh, where is the dove with the olive-branch? Long ago I told you that you and I might not live to see an end of the American war. It is very near its end indeed now—its consequences are far from a conclusion. In some respects, they are commencing a new date, which will reach far beyond *us*. I desire to pry not into that book of futurity. Could I finish my course in peace—but one must take the chequered scenes of life as they come. What signifies whether the elements are serene or turbulent, when a private old man slips away? What has he and the world's concerns to do with one another? He may sigh for his country, and babble about it; but he might as well sit quiet and read or tell old stories; the past is as important to him as the future.

Dec. 3.

I had not sealed my letter, as it cannot set out till to-morrow; and since I wrote it I have received yours, of the 20th of November, by your courier.

I congratulate you on the success of your attempts, and

[4] This was not the case.

admire the heroic refusal of the General[5]. I shall certainly obey you, and not mention it. Indeed, it would not easily be believed here, where as many pence are irresistible.

I shall be as silent on the burying ground at Leghorn: I do not wish to refresh a very wandering memory. Perhaps *my* making no opposition has, as I hoped, facilitated that oblivion. December is come, but I have heard nothing from Lucas. In fact, it is of no consequence, for Mr. Morrice, as I learnt on coming to town last week, is still laid up with a bad fit of the gout at Bath.

Your nephew told me that Mrs. Damer was hasting to Rome. I am glad that, as far as you could in so short a time, you did not find that I had exaggerated; but I know her shyness too well not to be sure that you could not discover a thousandth part of her understanding.

Your Mr. Jermy[6] was an ostentatious fool, of whom there is no more to be said. Formerly, when such simpletons did not know what to do with their wealth, they bequeathed it to the Church; and then, perhaps, one got a good picture for an altar, or a painted window.

Don't trouble yourself about the third set of Galuzzi. They are to be had here now, and those for whom I intended them can buy them. I have not made so much progress as I intended, and have not yet quite finished the second volume. I detest Cosmo the Great. I am sorry, either that he was so able a man, or so successful a man. When tyrants are great men they should miscarry; if they are fools, they will miscarry of course. Pray, is there any picture of Camilla Martelli, Cosmo's last wife? I had never heard of her. The dolt, his son, I find used her ill, and

[5] General Murray, Governor of Minorca, which was besieged by the Spaniards, was offered a vast bribe by the Duc de Crillon, the Spanish commander, to give up Fort St. Philip, but spurned at the offer. *Walpole.*

[6] A merchant at Leghorn, who left an absurd will.

then did the same thing. Our friend, Bianca Capello, it seems, was a worthless creature. I don't expect much entertainment but from the life of Ferdinand the Great. It is true I have dipped into the others, particularly into the story of Cosmo the Third's wife[7], of whom I had read much in French Mémoires, and into that of John Gastone, which was so fresh when I was at Florence; but as the author, in spite of the Great Duke's injunctions, has tried to palliate some of the worst imputations on Cosmo and his son Ferdinand, so he has been mighty modest about the Caprean amours of John Gaston and his elder brother[8]. Adieu! I have been writing a volume here myself. Pray remember to answer me about Camilla Martelli.

P.S. Is there any china left in the Great Duke's collection, made by Duke Francis the First himself? Perhaps it was lately sold with what was called the refuse of the wardrobe, whence I hear some charming things were purchased, particularly the medallions[9] of the Medici, by Benvenuto Cellini. That sale and the History are enough to make the old Electress[10] shudder in her coffin.

2243. To the Earl of Buchan.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 1, 1781.

I am truly sensible of, and grateful for, your Lordship's benevolent remembrance of me, and shall receive with great respect and pleasure the collection your Lordship has been pleased to order to be sent to me. I must admire too, my

[7] Marguérite Louise (d. 1723), second daughter of Gaston, Duc d'Orléans; m. (1661) Cosmo III, Grand Duke of Tuscany.

[8] Prince Ferdinand; d. 1713.

[9] They were only small models in wax, and were purchased by Sir William Hamilton. *Walpole.*

[10] The Electress Palatine Dowager, sister of John Gastone, the last Great Duke of the House of Medici, whom she survived, returned to Florence on her husband's death, and died there. *Walpole.*

Lord, the generous assistance that you have lent to your adopted children; but more forcibly than all I feel your pathetic expressions on the distress of the public, which is visible even in this extravagant and thoughtless city. The number of houses to be let in every street, whoever runs may read.

At the time of your writing your letter, your Lordship did not know the accumulation of misfortune and disgrace that has fallen on us; nor should I wish to be the trumpeter of my country's calamities. Yet as they must float on the surface of the mind, and blend their hue with all its emanations, they suggest this reflection, that there can be no time so proper for the institution of inquiries into past story as the moment of the fall of an empire,—a nation becomes a theme for antiquaries, when it ceases to be one for an historian!—and while its ruins are fresh and in legible preservation.

I congratulate your Lordship on the discovery of the Scottish monarch's portrait in Suabia, and am sorry you did not happen to specify of which; but I cannot think of troubling your Lordship to write again on purpose; I may probably find it mentioned in some of the papers I shall receive.

There is one passage in your Lordship's letter in which I cannot presume to think myself included; and yet if I could suppose I was, it would look like most impertinent neglect, and unworthiness of the honour that your Lordship and the Society have done me, if I did not at least offer very humbly to obey it. You are pleased to say, my Lord, that the members, when authors, have agreed to give copies of such of their works as any way relate to the objects of the institution. Amongst my very trifling publications, I think there are none that can pretend even remotely to that distinction, but the *Catalogue of Royal and Noble*

Authors, and the *Anecdotes of Painting*, in each of which are Scottish authors or artists. If these should be thought worthy of a corner on any shelf of the Society's library, I should be proud of sending, at your Lordship's command, the original edition of the first. Of the latter I have not a single set left but my own. But I am printing a new edition in octavo, with many additions and corrections, though without cuts, as the former edition was too dear for many artists to purchase. The new I will send when finished, if I could hope it would be acceptable, and your Lordship would please to tell me by what channel.

I am ashamed, my Lord, to have said so much, or anything relating to myself. I ask your pardon too for the slovenly writing of my letter; but my hand is both lame and shaking, and I should but write worse if I attempted transcribing.

I have the honour to be, &c.

P.S. It has this moment started into my mind, my Lord, that I have heard that at the old castle at Aubigny, belonging and adjoining to the Duke of Richmond's house, there are historic paintings or portraits of the ancient house of Lennox. I recollect too that Father Gordon, Superior of the Scots College at Paris, showed me a whole-length of Queen Mary, young, and which he believed was painted while she was Queen of France. He showed me too the original letter she wrote the night before her execution, some deeds of Scottish kings, and one of King (I think Robert) Bruce, remarkable for having no seal appendent, which, Father Gordon said, was executed in the time of his so great distress, that he was not possessed of a seal. I shall be happy if these hints lead to any investigation of use.

2244. To Robert Jephson.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 3, 1781.

I have not only a trembling hand, but scarce time to save the post; yet I write a few lines to beg you will be perfectly easy on my account, who never differ seriously with my friends, when I know they do not mean ill to me. I was sorry you took so much to heart an alteration in the scenery of your play, which did not seem to me very material; and which, having since been adjusted to your wish, had no better effect. I told you that it was my fault, not Mr. Malone's, who is warmly your friend; and I am sure you will be sorry if you do him injustice. I regret no pains I have taken, since they have been crowned with your success; and it would be idle in either of us to recall any little cross circumstance that may have happened (as always do in bringing a play on the stage), when they have not prevented its appearance or good fortune. Be assured, Sir, if that is worth knowing, that I have taken no offence, and have all the same good wishes for you that I ever had since I was acquainted with your merit and abilities. I can easily allow for the anxiety of a parent of your genius for his favourite offspring; and though I have not your parts, I have had the warmth, though age and illness have chilled it: but, thank God! they have not deprived me of my good-humour, and I am most good-humouredly and sincerely your obedient humble servant.

2245. To Sir Horace Mann.

Tuesday noon, Dec. 4, 1781.

I had sealed my letter, and sent to the office for your servant, when entered Lucas. He began with complaining

Letter 2245.—Not in C.; now first printed from transcript in possession of Earl Waldegrave. On the transcript Walpole has written 'this was sent with the preceding' (i. e. the letter to Mann of Nov. 29, 1781).

that Cav. Mozzi had written to Sharpe, laying all the blame of the delay on him (Lucas). I am sorry for this, as I told you, that though I had waited for Lucas, it was impossible to proceed without Mr. Morrice, who was gone to Bath. In any case it was not prudent to irritate my Lord's lawyers. Lucas tells me that Mr. Morrice is not likely to recover, and that the Cavalier is willing to refer all to me. *That*, I said, I would not accept. That if I was too favourable to my Lord, in the Cavalier's opinion, it might look like partiality to him, and prejudice to Lady O. On the other side, said I, Mr. Lucas, my own inclination, both to obviate those suspicions, and because I have never approved, nor do approve, my Lord's contesting anything with Cav. Mozzi, would lead me to favour the latter, and as a referee that might not be just. I should rather recommend that some able lawyer, either retired from business, or too much at his ease to descend to little dirtiness, should decide the whole. Lucas protested he could not think of such a person. I meant Lord Camden—but as he *would not name him*, I knew if I did, my Lord would object to him as unwelcome to the court. At last I thought on another, whom Lucas jumped at, and declared the most unexceptionable man in England,—and certainly there cannot be one more so. It is a Mr. Duane, a chamber-counsel—an old man, a very rich man, and of the fairest character upon earth, or you may be very sure I would not have recommended him. What will be an additional inducement to the Cavalier to take him for his referee, or rather for sole referee, though I will be joined with him so far as to produce everything in favour of the Cavalier, is, that he is a strict Roman Catholic, and if Mr. Mozzi will write to any foreign minister here, they will give him, or may procure him, the most satisfactory attestations of Mr. Duane's integrity. Lucas is gone to propose this to my Lord, who, he is sure, will readily

consent. Lucas said there would be no article of difficulty but that of interest—I would not enter into that,—but said, *that* must be guided by precedents, and it was for that reason that I wished to have the assistance of a lawyer. I have long known Mr. Duane as a virtuoso, but have no other connection with him, nor ever had any in his profession. He has been for two years my neighbour at Twickenham, which will make it more convenient for me, though otherwise I assure you I do not see him four times in a twelvemonth. He has the whole management of the affairs of Lord Ossory, one of my particular friends. Mr. Duane's fault is being too humble and acquiescent to those he thinks above him; but I believe this is only in his behaviour; and I, who am not ceremonious, but frank, shall tell him plainly at first I selected him from his character, and put it to his conscience to act according to *equity*, which, thank God, is as good law here as common law, and that I do expect him to tell me what is *fair*, which I have declared to my Lord is the ground on which I would stand, and which I called, as it ought to be, acting like a gentleman.

Dec. 6.

As my letter is still waiting for the *renvoi* of your courier, I must retract the latter part. Lucas has been with me again to-day, and says Mr. *Sharpe* does not approve the nomination of Mr. Duane; as it is not proper that there should be a lawyer on one side, and not one on my Lord's—I thought Lucas was to go to my Lord for approbation. I do not know what Mr. Sharpe had to do in that consultation—but this shows you what a juggle there is! However, it proves to me that I had made an excellent choice in Mr. Duane, and that Sharpe is afraid of so honest and intelligent a man. I am far from thinking that Sharpe is the former, and believe him more to blame than even

Lucas.—However, don't let Mozzi write these things back to England. Lucas says my Lord's claims with interest will come to between 5 and 6,000*l.*, and that new ones come out every day. He again said that Sharpe thinks Mozzi ought to divide the money here with my Lord—a most extra-judicial opinion *against* his own client, and which he gave before he knew a tittle of the justice of my Lord's claims. In short, I am offended at all this chicane, and if Cav. Mozzi would take my advice, he would come to England himself and employ Mr. Duane. I can keep back the cause, can easily, for I have inquired, and do not find Mr. Morrice is near so bad as Lucas told me, nor in particular danger. If he does recover, I will advise him to consult Mr. Duane, who I am persuaded will advise us more equitably than Sharpe and Lucas.

As the beginning of my letter was designed for the post, I spoke very cautiously. As even your courier is liable to be taken by a privateer, I shall not say much. Our affairs are certainly in a dismal way, and will soon be worse. Lord Cornwallis's disgrace has not made vast impression, none on the Parliament—but a drop will overset a vessel that is full to the brim. London and Westminster are preparing for remonstrances, and the opposition has recovered spirit, and the ministers are brought to shame every day—though not ashamed—but they are all at variance; and all the world sees, incapable. What or when some crash will be, I know not, but there is no sense in not expecting it, unless from none having happened yet.

I admire and applaud your zeal and activity about Minorca. Continue them, serve your country, and comfort yourself with doing your duty. You will have no external praise. Neither Lord North nor his master thank or take notice of those that have done best. This is strictly true.

General Vaughan, their own creature, has not had his services mentioned to him—I could name a dozen more equally disgusted. In truth, they are infatuated, and all the servility and sluggishness of the country will be counteracted by the folly of those whom it preserves. Adieu! I have not time to add more—yet sure eight pages compose no short letter.

P.S. I dare to say your history of Florence was received, but still less are such things honoured with notice. Pray convey the enclosed to Sir W. Hamilton as soon as you can, and safely.

2246. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Tuesday noon, Dec. 18, 1781.

I heard our parenthesis of good news too late last night, Madam, to give you an inkling of it; and I doubt whether, if we should receive a complete wreath of sea-flags, I shall have time to send you a leaf to-day, as I am to dine with Princess Amelie, and shall not be dismissed before the post departs. As American liberty is safe, I shall like prodigiously to have crushed a quota of the French navy, and shall love Admiral Kempenfeldt[1] as much as Lord Sandwich himself can. The East Indian triumph[2] is firmly believed. If we only conquer at t'other end of the world, and lose all our nearer possessions, we shall be like a trapes in the Strand, that one sees with short petticoats and a long train. I will keep my letter open till the coach comes to the door, in

Letter 2246. — [1] Rear-Admiral Richard Kempenfelt (1718–1782), who perished when the *Royal George* went down at Spithead. On Dec. 12, 1781, when in command of a squadron off Ushant, he captured twenty vessels belonging to a French convoy bound for the West Indies.

[2] Coote's victory over Hyder Ali at Porto Novo on July 1, 1781.

hopes of a fortunate express, as I have begged Lady Hertford to send me the earliest news.

I was diverted last night at Lady Lucan's. The moment I entered, she set me down to whist with Lady Bute—and who do you think were the other partners? the Archbishopess of Canterbury[3] and Mr. Gibbon. I once saved Lady Suffolk at the Dowager Essex's from playing at the same table with Lady Yarmouth. I saw Lady Suffolk ready to sink, and took her cards from her, saying, 'I know your Ladyship hates whist, and I will play instead of you.'

If I am too late, should any account come, I conclude Mr. Fitzpatrick will write.

I have been listening impatiently for the Park guns; but it is past two, and they are dumb. I fear their office is almost grown a sinecure, like the Laureate's, who only chants anniversaries, whether glad or sorry!

To divert my impatience, I will tell your Ladyship a story that George Selwyn told us t'other day, after dinner, at Lord Hertford's, and you will allow the authority to be very good. When Mr. de Grey[4] became Baron of Walsingham, he felt that so high a rank, and a title so illustrated, could not consort with commercial commissioners, he resigned his seat at the Board of Trade. Lord Carlisle obtained it for Storer, who kissed hands, vacated his seat, and was re-elected; but, lo! the great Baron of Walsingham cried, 'Hold! I am above the place, but till I have another as lucrative, I will not relinquish the salary'—that is, livery and labour degrade; wages for doing nothing, do not; and so poor Storer has already lost four hundred pounds, because a peer blushes to be in the red-book below his rank, but not to take another

[3] Catherine, daughter of William Townshend, third son of second Viscount Townshend; m. (1759) Hon. Frederick Cornwallis, at that time Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry.

[4] Thomas de Grey (1748–1818), second Baron Walsingham, to which title he succeeded on his father's death in May 1781.

man's pension who works for it! Do not you like, Madam, to see a grandee hopping with one foot on the *haut du pavé*, and t'other in the kennel, *party per pale*, ermine and mud! It is just four; I must seal my letter, and go.

2247. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Dec. 19, 1781.

There! Madam, there! one cannot for a moment expect success, but one is in a scrape, and involved in disgrace! Runners come forth in swarms, buzz about one's ears, cry Victory! transports taken! an expedition defeated! the West Indies saved! and one is such a driveller as to believe them, and to die with impatience for half a dozen French men-of-war towed into Portsmouth, and as many sunk, with the loss of only a leg or arm to some of one's particular friends; next night comes out a *Gazette*, and coolly tells you, 'Yes, we had taken a few transports, though, somehow or other, we have dropped half a dozen by the way; and as to destroying the enemies' fleet, why, they happened to be an overmatch for us, as they had five little vessels of 110 guns each, which had been concealed behind a mole-hill out of sight of any of our cutters; and so we contented ourselves with our day's sport, and hope you will not be much disappointed.' 'Well, but what have you done with the West Indies?' 'Oh! they will go: but you have got the East Indies in their stead, and, sure, diamonds and gold are preferable to sugar; and had not you rather our gracious sovereign was great Mogul, than master of two or three islands almost as small as Mecklenberg?' I wish you good night, Madam; I have done with politics, they make me sick!

2248. To the Rev. William Mason.

Dec. 20, 1781.

I should not have waited for your sending me a topic if I had had anything entertaining or comfortable to tell you. Who would not be worn out by repetition of disgraces, follies, obstinacy, and profligate corruption? When fools are converted into heroes, or blunt tools are blamed for the awkwardness of the artificer, are these novelties worthy of detail? I am weary of writing such a series of paltry circumstances. The crisis of our total ruin comes on with larger strides, and it seems as if it would arrive without any convulsions of the patient. As to county meetings, I will say nothing on them for several reasons that you know. Managed as they have been, I think they will but subdivide our calamities and our disunion, and heal neither. I have a more recent reason that I will not tell you till I see you. In truth it were idle to make objections when they, and I fear everything else is too late. The nation is both insensible and senseless: nor misfortunes, nor dishonour, nor danger can alarm or make it feel. I thought they would: I have been mistaken. I may be so again when I repeat what I have often said, that if ever we do awake, the *réveil* will be terrible; for they who have voluntarily been fools will pretend they have been dupes (which is not true, as the artifices employed were too shallow), and then being angry, they will enrage themselves to prove that for once they are in the right; they will do an infinite deal of mischief in the wrong place; and then out of repentance as much the contrary way. That some others expect a storm is evident, for a few of the most shameless instigators of the American war are now the loudest against it, and call that apostasy, conviction, though it is solely dictated by the

hope of saving their places on a change. The readiest flatterers will always be the first renegades. I dare to say that the soldier who spit in the face of Charles I as he went to his trial, had some years before been the most noisy and officious when on guard at the gate of Whitehall; but such squabbles are nothing to me, and they who have drugged the bowl must drink the dregs.

I have looked into Mr. Bryant[1] and dipped here and there into Dr. Milles, but without cutting the leaves of the latter. From him one can expect nothing. From the former I did expect ingenuity, but he seems to have neither taste nor ear, and, which is stranger, to reason poorly. I have only skimmed his second volume. I cannot wade into all that mass of old English and bad authors. Any man may convince me if he will but write enough and dully enough, for I had rather believe than read. Both the Dean and Bryant I could see have inverted Chatterton's character, have erected him into a lad of high and haughty honour, but deny his wonderful parts. Bryant quotes here and there a wretched distich to prove his hypothesis, and then from some of our miserable old rhymers selects here and there a tolerable couplet. He now controverts the supposition of a third personage, though, as I told you last year, he himself had chosen that plea; and yet he again gives some of the MSS. to one Turgot; but for a specimen of his logic see what he says of Gray's beautiful stanza, where he evidently mistakes the sense of the words themselves and their context:—

> Hands that the rod of Empire *might* have swayed.

Yet 'what were they,' says Bryant, 'but ploughmen and labourers?' So says Gray; but does not the word *might* imply that had they had education, they might have been

Letter 2248.—[1] Bryant and Milles had recently written in support of their belief in the antiquity of the Rowley poems.

Cromwells? But I am as weary of that controversy as if it were a political one.

There is a curious pamphlet worth your looking into, a Letter to Jenkinson; it has made some gross blunders, but goes more to the real point than anything I have seen. Read particularly p. 41, where much is stated in a small compass.

I asked Sir Joshua t'other night if he had done anything towards your Notes; he said No, but he had some ideas in his head, though at present he was busy on arranging his own notes taken in Flanders. I do not want either, but I do want your poem published. Adieu! will you not come this winter?

2249. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 21, 1781.

I SENT you a long letter by your servant, with another enclosed for Sir William Hamilton. That for you contained a great deal about Mozzi's affair, and as your couriers outstrip the winds, I conclude that you have already received it. No time has been lost in the interval, for Mr. Morrice is still at Bath, and though not in danger, so weakened by over-bathing, that I hear nothing of his coming to town. I remain of the opinion I gave you last, that Cav. Mozzi had better come over himself.

There has been no event, except Parliamentary debates, since my last, till last Monday; when news came of Sir Eyre Coote's having defeated Hyder Ally in India, and when we were flattered with promising hopes of Admiral Kempenfeldt's demolishing and disappointing the French expedition from Brest to the West Indies. Our Admiral had fallen into the thick of their transports, of which nineteen had struck. Commodore Elliot was engaged with the French

Admiral, and had dismasted him; and, when the express came away, Kempenfeldt was bearing down with the wind to attack the squadron, which he had been told did not outnumber his own fourteen. You may judge how our hopes and impatience rose and increased. I waited till four the next day, when being to dine and pass the evening with Princess Amelie, which I knew would prevent my writing, though post-night, I sent to beg your nephew, if any good news should come, to write to you incontinently. He was not come to town, but was expected every minute. Alas! before I left the Princess, we heard that a second express was just arrived; that our Admiral, besides the fourteen hostile ships, had discovered five more, each mounting 110 or 112 guns; and that, not thinking it prudent to encounter so superior a force, he had retreated, and brought away but fourteen transports, containing about nine hundred men. Neither all of them, nor he himself, are yet arrived, and the expedition has probably continued its course[1], and there is new danger to our West Indian islands.

Perhaps we have not received a worse blow than this disappointment. If Lord Sandwich can weather it, he will be skilful or fortunate indeed! In one word, what can be said either for his having no intelligence of five ships of such magnitude, or for dispatching Kempenfeldt with only fourteen, when Rodney was not sailed, and when we have several more ships lying in port at Portsmouth? Most mouths are opened against him, not only in opposition and in town, but at court. Lord Rockingham did commence the attack the very next day in the Lords, though not in form; and one piece of luck has already happened to the Great Delinquent, that the Parliament adjourns to-day for the holidays, and will give him a temporary reprieve for

LETTER 2249.—[1] Only two of the men-of-war and a few transports continued the voyage; the other ships returned to Brest.

manœuvres and defence, if new calamities do not inflame exasperation.

The King of France is said to have sent for Cardinal de Bernis to be Prime Minister[2] again; but that you must know better than I. I am interrupted, and must finish.

2250. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 22, 1781.

Your inquiries about Miss Keppel are very kind indeed, Madam. Till within these four or five days I was not at all alarmed about her; and thought, from her *embonpoint*, that a cough would be of no consequence; but Mrs. Keppel is so terrified by the many fatal disorders that have carried off almost all the house of Albemarle, that she has frightened me too, and but this morning, by the Duke's command, I proposed to her to carry her daughter abroad, to which she immediately consented, and I believe will, if, upon farther consultation, it is judged right.

In answer to your Ladyship's other question, in good truth my serenity is not at all ruffled; nor would it be yet, were it ever likely to be. It would be as ruffleable as a porcupine, had it set up its quill yet, for hitherto I am only reading both Bryant and Milles by deputy. I skimmed the former's second volume, and dipped into one or two pages of the latter, but though I have tough patience at a tedious book, I doubt I shall never compass all the ancient lore in Mr. Bryant's first volume, and still less its *caput mortuum* in the Dean's. I let Lady Ailesbury carry Bryant to Park Place before I had finished a quarter of what I intend to read, and have lent t'other to a clergyman. Mr. Conway says Mr. Bryant has very nearly convinced him, and he (Bryant) certainly has ingenuity enough to be a formidable

[2] This was not the case.

adversary, whether one is in the right or in the wrong; yet, where I have looked into him, I thought I saw weak places. However, I am unalterably determined not to write a word more on the subject. I have declared I would not in my defence of myself; and have determined, besides, not to write more on any subject, and least on this, because, having unwillingly taken a part, I must be prejudiced. But, in fact, I look on this controversy as I do on other problems of faith which can never be cleared up to the satisfaction of everybody; and I do not believe that the salvation of my understanding depends on crediting legends, when it requires so much learning to prove it probable that the supposed author ever existed; and if he did exist, that he was inspired; which Rowley must have been. The corporal evidence I had seen before, and very vague and inconclusive it is; but shall I not be doubly out of luck, Madam, if Rowley is pronounced Gospel? I believed in Ossian, who is now tumbled into the Apocrypha; and I doubted of Rowley, who is now to rank with Moses and the prophets!—I doubt I have very bad judgement.

As to Lord Macartney, whom your Ladyship describes with the Arabian eloquence of Scheherezade, and with much more wit, when you make him ride on three elephants at once like Astley[1]. I own, since his paltry behaviour to me about Lady Mary Wortley's letters, I take no part in his triumphs, nor care whether he rises in the east or sinks again in the west. He was treacherous to me at the very moment he had been greatly obliged to me. I have not equal faith in Lady Derby's triumphs—yet, as I have been telling you, I had rather believe anything than contest it; and were I to hear that Dr. Hunter was sent to Versailles to make a new treaty of Paris with the Queen's

LETTER 2250. — [1] Philip Astley (1742–1814), formerly Sergeant-Major in Elliot's Light Horse. He opened a theatre in Lambeth, called the Amphitheatre Riding House, in 1770.

accoucheur (who you say, Madam, is made free of the theatre), I would not dispute it—nay, I should rejoice; for, considering how many *miscarriages* we have had, it could not be so scandalous a piece as the last.

2251. To Edmond Malone.

Dec. 22, 1781.

I am very sure, Sir, that the four lines with which Mr. Gardiner[1] has honoured me, are much too great a compliment, and will be thought so by all who have not some friendly partiality for me. I am not a poet; and though I have written verses at times, more of them have been bad than good. However, as next to vanity I should dislike to be thought guilty of affected modesty, and as I have no right that, in compliment to either, Mr. Gardiner's beautiful lines should be suppressed, though he was so obliging as to sacrifice them at the representation, which I confess I could not have stood, I will take no more liberties, nor object to the publication. Yet should I be taxed with consenting, I must comfort myself that I did not acquiesce till I had no right to refuse.

I very seldom go out in a morning, Sir, but will certainly have the honour of waiting on you soon: and am, Sir, with great respect,

Your most obedient humble servant,

Hor. Walpole.

Letter 2251.—Not in C.; now reprinted from Prior's *Life of Malone*, p. 85.

[1] Luke, son of Charles Gardiner, of Dublin. He was created (Sept. 19, 1789) Baron Mountjoy of Mountjoy, Tyrone, and Viscount Mountjoy in 1795. He was a friend of Jephson, and a well-known amateur actor. He was killed at the battle of Ross in 1798. The 'four lines' mentioned occur in his Prologue to *The Count of Narbonne*:—

'Yet ere the fable was to verse consigned,
'Twas by a master's skilful hand designed;
Who now, retired, neglects the wreaths of fame,
And more than poet, shuns a poet's name.'

2252. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Christmas Day, 1781.

I always answer immediately, Madam, if I have time; because as letters ought to be nothing but extempore conversations upon paper, if the reply is not speedy, the curiosity that prompted the question may be passed before the answer arrives. Nothing, then, can be further from my thoughts than accompanying my niece abroad, if she should go, which is not determined, as her disorder seems to be an inflammation on her breast, and not a tendency to consumption. For me, who only pendulate from Berkeley Square to Strawberry, and think Ampthill as far as the antipodes, and who was near dashing my brains out on Saturday night, by missing a step at Mrs. Keppel's door, if David had not caught me in his arms like a baby thrown out of window when a house is on fire, is it possible that I should think myself able to convoy anybody else? Oh no, Madam; nor were I as brawny as Commodore Johnstone, would I set my foot on the Continent at present, when every country in Europe, except we ourselves, must be sensible of our shame!

For your Ladyship's other question, why I do not publish my letter on Chatterton? what, because I don't know who in the newspaper wants to see it! My resolutions must be light as gossamer if such a breath could make them waver. I flattered myself that you knew me enough to be sure that when I have once made a resolution, it is not the easiest thing in the world to shake it: much less such an idle controversy as, whether Rowley or Chatterton was Rowley, which is as indifferent to me as who is churchwarden of St. Martin's parish. And how can I care now what is thought about it? When I have outlived all the

principles and maxims purchased for us *by the noble army of martyrs*, and when there is nothing so foolish and absurd that is not believed and adopted, what matters whether Ossian, or Rowley, or Mother Goose's Tales are canonized as classics? Thank my natal stars I was born in a better age, and had much rather be what I was, an author of a very inferior class twenty years ago, than the brightest luminary that is bound in morocco and gold, and presented to the library in the Park[1] at this disastrous era—to be elbowed by Scotch metaphysics, and led out of my senses by Scotch historians; and not get a wink of sleep on my shelf, though a forgotten author, from hearing Dr. Hunter teach the youngest prince his Erse alphabet, or being stunned by a dialogue half Highland and half German, between the librarian and Madame Schevellenberg! Lady, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, &c.

2253. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 28, 1781.

I HAVE gone regularly through three volumes of the house of Medici, and dipped into a good deal of the fourth. It is rather not well written than ill written; the style is more languid than faulty, and thence neither interests nor disgusts. What pleases me most is, that, besides the two first Great Dukes being great men, Cosmo the Second and Ferdinand the Second were very good princes; and, though John Gastone was very vicious, he was not a bad prince: a much larger proportion of good and great, out of seven, than happens to most sovereign families; perhaps to most elevated families. Francis the First seems to have had no virtues; Cosmo the Third would, some few centuries ago, have passed for the best of all; because a proud silly bigot,

LETTER 2252.—[1] The King's library.

who impoverished his subjects to enrich the clergy. In short, I like the author's general impartiality; and, though he sometimes spares his Florentine masters, he has no criminal favour for the rest of the kings of Europe. I wish the line of Popes were extinct, like the Medici, that the world might have a chance for seeing their true history too. Indeed, Galuzzi gives it roundly, when it comes in his way; so much, that I imagine *that* to have been the chief motive to the publication, and to have originated with Cæsar himself[1], who may perhaps have an eye to some imperial fiefs usurped by the Popes. The author's severity on such a succession of rascals makes one trust him when he speaks well of any of them. How shameless do others of them appear, when one finds them extending their impudent encroachments, after so large a part of Europe had opened its eyes! On the other hand, how must we English smile at their opposite folly, in seeing them refuse a dispensation for a match with a heretic to our wretched James the First, at the instigation of old Mother Bellarmine[2]! That part is very new to us, and, if Lord Clarendon came to the knowledge of it, he suppressed it; for, though a sincere Protestant, he had so much of the Church in him, that, like the motto on their bells, 'Fear God, honour the King,' he was always swinging between both. I like the author, too, for touching on the knavery of two of my noble authors, the *good* Earls of Salisbury[3] and Northampton[4]; and still more so for the justly bitter things he says of Louis XIII and Richelieu. He is rather too severe on Henry IV and Sully; if the first was too easy and good-humoured, and the latter too economic a politician to be

LETTER 2253. — [1] The Emperor Joseph II. *Walpole.*

[2] Cardinal Roberto Bellarmine (1542-1621).

[3] Robert Cecil (1563-1612), first Earl of Salisbury of that family; the son of the celebrated Burleigh.

[4] Henry Howard, first Earl of Northampton.

strictly just, one may rejoice rather than weep when nations have no worse reproaches to make to their governors. The part that diverted me the most, in a ludicrous light, was the court of the Archbishop of Florence condemning the Parliament of England to pay eight millions two hundred thousand pounds sterling to Dudley, Duke of Northumberland,—another of my noble authors! One would think that court had existed in the present age, when foreigners *think* —I fear I must now say *thought*—there could be no end of our wealth. I wonder such stupendous ideas of our opulence did not weigh with Paul the Fifth to grant the dispensation, in spite of conscientious Bellarmine. Be it remembered for once, that churchmen were more scrupulous than rapacious.

I asked you whether there was any picture of Camilla Martelli. I have found a print of her, amongst the hundred heads of the house of Medici, by Allegrini. You cannot imagine how pleased I am to find that I have lost so little either of my Italian or of my memory of Florence, after so long a disuse. I am sorry you never mention any of my acquaintance there: no doubt, most of them are gone off; but you would oblige me by naming such as are still alive. This letter is a parenthesis between our present momentous politics, written in the holidays, in the solitude and silence of Strawberry. I shall finish it in town, whither I shall go in two days, expecting to hear new disasters.

Monday night, 31st.

I have this moment received yours of the 13th by your third courier, with those enclosed for your nephew and mine. I imagine the former is not in town, but I shall send it to his house; the other never is, but the mere hours of his waiting; but I have sealed, directed, and sent it to the post. The monument[5] will not be dear, but it is ugly

[5] Lord Orford's monument to his mother.

enough in conscience. Yet, what signifies that, or the blunders? Over the arms is a baron's coronet, I suppose to imply my Lady's barony of Clinton; yet it should not be there, for the shield containing only the arms of Walpole and some of the quarterings, makes it represent only a Baron Walpole; that is, my brother before my father's death. To signify Lady Clinton, it ought to be her arms quartering Clinton in a shield of pretence in the middle of her husband's arms, or rather in the same manner, but in a lozenge, as a widow; for the barony did not descend to her in my brother's life. But all this would be algebra to a Florentine sculptor;—nor do I wish to have it clear for whom it was designed,—nor, if known, will any English herald or antiquary probably ever see it. My Lord, in this past month, determined on an expedition to visit his new domains in Dorset and Devon shires, and his seats at Piddletown and Heanton were ordered to be aired and prepared for his reception, and Lucas was dispatched to the latter (in Devonshire) to notify his arrival, and invite the neighbouring gentry to the ceremony of inauguration. The Earl followed, arrived at Piddletown (in Dorsetshire), changed his mind, returned to his hovel at Eriswell, and left Lucas to tell the other county how perfectly his Lordship is in his senses.

I have not found a tittle of news in town; therefore I shall send this away by the post to-morrow, and write again by the return of your courier, if I hear any novelty.

Pray, whose is the portrait that my Lord has so tenderly redemanded? The Countess certainly did not value any picture of our family enough to lug it behind her chaise to Italy, as Lady Pomfret did Lady Bell Finch's, for which you remember she had a new frame made in every town she stopped at. Perhaps it is his grandpapa Jack Harris's, or Mr. Sewallis Shirley's, the latter of whom had some

claim to be registered on the future monument. In my Lord's fit of posthumous piety he may have grown fond, too, of step grandfathers and fathers, though he has not yet acquired affection for those who passed for his real progenitors.

After Doctors' Commons had lain fallow for a year or two, it is again likely to bear a handsome crop of divorces. Gallantry in this country scorns a mask. Maids only intrigue, wives elope. *C'est l'étiquette.* Two young married ladies are just gone off—no, this is a wrong term for one of them; for she has just come to town, and drives about London, for fear her adventure should be forgotten before it comes into the House of Lords. It is a Lady Worseley[6], sister of Lady Harrington[7]. On hearing she was gone away with a Major Blisset, another young gentleman said, at St. James's Coffee House, 'I have been very secret; but now, I think, I am at liberty to show this letter.' It was couched in these laconic and sentimental terms: 'I have loved Windham, I did love Graham, but now I love only you, by God.' I am a little angry for my nephew, Lord Cholmondeley, who has been most talked of for her, and who is thought to have the largest pretensions to her remembrance. If you see him, you may tell him I resent her forgetfulness; we believe him in Italy. Adieu!

P.S. I find upon inquiry at the office that your courier only came from Minorca, and if he does return, it will not be, as he is very lame, for some time.

[6] Seymour Dorothy, second daughter of Sir John Fleming, first Baronet, of Brompton Park, Middlesex; m. (1775) Sir Richard Worsley, seventh Baronet, of Appuldercombe, in the Isle of Wight.

[7] Jane, eldest daughter of Sir John Fleming; m. (1779) Charles Stanhope, third Earl of Harrington; d. 1824.

2254. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 30, 1781.

We are both hearty friends, my dear Sir, for I see we have both been reproaching ourselves with silence at the same moment. I am much concerned that you have had cause for yours. I have had less, though indisposed too in a part material for correspondence, my right hand, which has been in labour of chalk-stones this whole summer, and at times so nervous as to tremble so much, that except when quite necessary, I have avoided a pen. I have been delivered of such a quantity of chalky matter, that I am not only almost free from pain, but hope to avoid a fit this winter. How there can be a doubt what the gout is, amazes me! what is it, but a concretion of humours, that either stop up the fine vessels, cause pain and inflammation, and pass away only by perspiration; or which discharge themselves into chalk-stones, which sometimes remain in their beds, sometimes make their passage outwardly? I have experienced all three. It may be objected that the sometimes instantaneous removal of pain from one limb to another is too rapid for a current of chalk—true, but not for the humour before coagulated. As there is, evidently, too, a degree of wind mixed with the gout, may not that wind be impregnated with the noxious effluvia, especially as the latter are pent up in the body and may be corrupted?—I hope your present complaint in the foot will clear the rest of your person.

Many thanks for your etching of Mr. Browne Willis: I shall value it not only as I am a collector, but because he was your friend.

What shall I say about Mr. Gough? he is not a pleasant man, and I doubt will tease me with curiosity about many

things, some of which I never cared about, and all which I interest myself little about now, when I seek to pass my remnant in most indolent tranquillity. He has not been very civil to me, he worships the fools I despise, and, I conceive, has no genuine taste—yet as to trifling resentments, when the objects have not acted from bad hearts, I can most readily lose them. Please Mr. Gough I certainly shall not: I cannot be very grave about such idle studies as his and my own, and am apt to be impatient, or to laugh when people imagine I am serious about them. But there is a stronger reason why I shall not satisfy Mr. Gough. He is a man to minute down whatever one tells him that he may call information, and whip it into his next publication. However, though I am naturally very frank, I can regulate myself by those I converse with; and as I shall be on my guard, I will not decline visiting Mr. Gough, as it would be illiberal or look surly if I refused. You shall have the merit, if you please, of my assent, and shall tell him, I shall be glad to see him any morning at eleven o'clock. This will save you the trouble of sending me his new work, as I conclude he will mention it to me.

I more willingly assure you that I shall like to see Mr. Steevens, and to show him Strawberry. You never sent me a person you commended, that I did not find deserved it.

You will be surprised when I tell you that I have only dipped into Mr. Bryant's book, and lent the Dean's[1] before I had cut the leaves, though I had peeped into it enough to see that I shall not read it. Both he and Bryant are so diffuse on our antiquated literature, that I had rather believe in Rowley than go through their proofs. Mr. Warton and Mr. Tyrwhit have more patience, and intend to answer them—and so the controversy will be two hundred years

LETTER 2254.—[1] Milles, Dean of Exeter.

out of my reach. Mr. Bryant, I did find, begged a vast many questions, which proved to me his own doubts. Dr. Glynn's foolish evidence made me laugh—and so did Mr. Bryant's sensibility *for me.* He says Chatterton treated me very *cruelly* in one of his writings—I am sure I did not feel it so. I suppose Bryant means under the title of *Baron of Otranto,* which is written with humour. I must have been the sensitive-plant, if anything in that character had hurt me! Mr. Bryant too, and the Dean, as I see by extracts in the papers, have decorated Chatterton with sanctimonious honour—think of that young rascal's note, by where, summing up his gains and losses by writing for and against Beckford, he says, 'Am glad he is dead by 3*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*' *There* was a lad of too nice honour to be capable of forgery!—and a lad who, they do not deny, forged the poems in the style of Ossian, and fifty other things. In the parts I did read, Mr. Bryant, as I expected, reasons admirably, and staggered me; but when I took up the poems called Rowley's again, I protest I cannot see the smallest air of any antiquity but the old words. The whole texture is conceived on ideas of the present century. The liberal manner of thinking of a monk so long before the Reformation is as stupendous—and where he met with Ovid's *Metamorphosis,* eclogues, and plans of Greek tragedies, when even Caxton, a printer, took Virgil's *Æneid* for so rare a novelty, are not less incomprehensible—though on these things I speak at random, nor have searched for the era when the Greek and Latin classics came again to light—at present, I imagine, long after our Edward the Fourth.

Another thing struck me in my very cursory perusal of Bryant. He asks where Chatterton could find so much knowledge of English events? I could tell him where he might, by a very natural hypothesis, though merely an

hypothesis. It appears by the evidence that Canninge[2] left six chests of MSS., and that Chatterton got possession of some or several. Now, what was therein so *probably* as a diary drawn up by Canninge himself, or some church-warden or wardens, or by a monk or monks? Is anything more natural than for such a person, amidst the events at Bristol, to set down such other public facts as happened in the rest of the kingdom? Was not such almost all the materials of our ancient story? There is actually such an one, with some curious collateral facts, if I am not mistaken, for I write by memory, in the history of Furnese or Fountain's Abbey, I forget which—if Chatterton found such an one, did he want the extensive literature on which so much stress is laid? Hypothesis for hypothesis, I am sure this is as rational an one as the supposition that six chests were filled with poems never else heard of.

These are my indigested thoughts on this matter—not that I ever intend to digest them—for I will not, at sixty-four, sail back into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and be drowned in an ocean of monkish writers of these ages or of this!

Yours most sincerely,
H. Walpole.

2255. To John Fenn.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 31, 1781.

I think myself very unlucky, Sir, in having been out of town when you did me the favour of calling here; I should always be glad of the honour of seeing you, and do not at all forget the obligations I have to you. The little pamphlet

[2] William Canynge (d. 1474). 'Thomas Rowley,' Chatterton's imaginary monk, was supposed to have been his confessor.

Letter 2255.—Not in C.; now first printed from original in possession of Mr. Arthur W. Frere.

you desire shall be at your service, if you will be so good as to let me know how to convey it, as though slender, it is too large for the post. What I have said on the imaginary Rowley's poems is only cursorily. I never thought of entering into that controversy; nor should I have written on it, if amongst the many fictions it has occasioned, a gross accusation had not been fastened on me—no great credit to some at least who have espoused the *invention*, a word I may use in one of its senses if not in all.

I have looked into Mr. Bryant, though not accurately, and am free to own that, as I expected from his abilities, he has brought many strong arguments in favour of his hypothesis, though, which I did not expect, some very weak ones too. He certainly has not entirely convinced himself, at least I guess so, from his many arbitrary assumptions, and from the doubts which he confesses he cannot solve—but when he denies great parts to Chatterton, and talks of his scorn of imposture, I see extreme prejudice in Mr. Bryant, and wonder how so good an understanding can unite the contrarieties of doubt and partiality.

Dean Milles's bulky book I have not read. From him in truth I expect nor judgement nor logic.

I do not believe, Sir, that you will find in the MSS. you are searching, any mention of Rowley, or anywhere else—but when you have perused all that can be said in behalf of the authenticity of the poems ascribed to him, I will venture to say, that if *you*, who are so well versed in our ancient literature, will read over those poems again, and can discover any train of thinking, any structure of phrases, or any modulation that has the smallest appearance of resemblance to the authors of the fifteenth century, but which on the contrary are not all similar to those of the seventeenth and eighteenth, I will confess that I have not a grain of judgement, taste, or ear, and that there is no

criterion for distinguishing the productions of a monk of a most barbarous age, from those of an elegant author of a very polished one. The Dean, as I saw by an extract from him in the newspapers, treats with contempt those who think that a monk of that fifteenth century could not be capable of writing like the authors of this illuminated age—I know that a monk of the eighteenth century can write like his brethren of three hundred years ago, but I did not know that that position was convertible. I am, Sir, with great regard,

Your most obedient
and obliged humble servant,
HOR. WALPOLE.

2256. To the Rev. William Mason.

Jan. 8, 1782.

I have seen an *Ode to Hope* by the Duchess of Devonshire and *Hope's Answer*[1]. The first is easy and prettily expressed, though it does not express much. The second is the genteelest sermon I ever saw and by much the best-natured, and the expression charming. The conclusive lines are admirable, and the first time I believe that a compliment to a fine lady conveyed a most grave lesson of morality; yet so delicately that it might be read at a ball without shocking a fine gentleman. It is precisely the reverse of *not mentioning hell to ears polite*[2]. Nay, though flattery and poetry, it must be pronounced in the pulpit, all this is such a novelty that I wish for a copy of both, *s'entend*, as the first founds one part of the merit of the second.

I was refreshed by this sight after being stupefied by

LETTER 2256.—[1] Written by Mason.
[2] 'Who never mentions hell to ears polite.'
Pope, *Epistle to Lord Burlington*, l. 149.

Dr. Milles's waggon-load of notes on Rowley, which I have at last been reading. They have all the dull impertinence of a Dutch commentary, an ostentatious parade of all he knows, to the purpose or not, accompanied with bombast preferences of Rowley to Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Homer, Virgil, &c., &c. I am suffocated: pray let *Hope* give me some comfort. I know nothing else; the war, and the French fleet and the West Indies, and Lord Sandwich, and Lord Cornwallis, are all gone out of town, I believe for the holidays.

There is a nightingale-woman, I am told, called the Allegranti, who sings so sweetly that Lady Mary Duncan and Lady Mount Edgecumbe turn their backs when she warbles, because you know people only hear with their faces, and nothing is fit to be heard but Pacchierotti. As I have no ear but in my eyes I shall go to see this Philomel.

Pray write to me, for I have nothing to do, and nothing to say: I can still answer letters or questions, but I find I cannot answer them if they are not written or asked: my goose-quill is grown very grey.

2257. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Monday night, Jan. 7, 1782.

I was angry, I am angry; but the gods know, not with you, Madam, nor with anybody else in particular. I am aggrieved by nobody. Mine is an honester and an unselfish indignation. I am hurt to see all prospects annihilated that would have made one care about what is to survive one. Nothing will be left of England but the vestiges of its grandeur; and what shocks one already is, that the vandalism that overspreads ruined empires has anteceded our last moments. Bad taste, spite, calumny, pert dullness,

and blundering affectation of humour have taken place of everything agreeable. I would not quote such records as the newspapers, if they were not the oracles of the times, and what everybody reads and cites. Besides Macpherson's daily column of lies, is there a paragraph that is not scandalous or malevolent even in those that are set apart as a tithe for truth? Half of each is replete with error and ignorance. If a family has a misfortune of any kind, it is cast in every mould in ill-nature's shop, and the public is *diverted* in every way in which it can be misconstrued. I need instance but in the late melancholy adventure of Lord Camden's daughter[1]. Is not a country more savage than Hottentots, where all private distresses are served up the next morning for the breakfast and entertainment of the public? When you have waded through the scandal of the day, the next repast is a long dissertation on two contending pantomimes, while a mixture of losses of ships and armies and islands is a glaring mark of the insensible stupidity of the age, which is less occupied by national disgrace and calamity, than by slander that used to be confined to old maids, and follies only fit for children. A week's newspapers preserved to the end of the next century will explain why we are fallen so low. They would supply Voltaire with a chapter on *les mœurs du temps.* I think I have justified myself and my contempt for the times I live in, Madam, and why I am not ambitious of having it remembered that I belonged to them.

I cannot answer your Ladyship's questions about Lord Essex's trial; indeed I do not remember the circumstance.

Miss Keppel is much better. Sir Richard Jebb is confident of its being a bilious case.

LETTER 2257. — [1] Hon. Frances Pratt (d. 1833), eldest daughter of first Baron (afterwards first Earl) Camden; m. (1775), as his second wife, Robert Stewart, afterwards Marquis of Londonderry.

I have been this evening at Miss Monkton's[2] to see Mademoiselle Theodore dance a minuet with young Edgecumbe[3]; and to-morrow I shall go to the Opera, for the first time this year, to see her and hear the Allegranti, as Queen Elizabeth's reign is over, and there is no likelihood of there being any trials. I do not believe that even her ghost condescended to peep at the ball that was given at Hatfield last Thursday to the county of Hertford.

Pray do not forget Lord Chandos[4] at Woburn. Mine is in black profusely laced with silver, a white waistcoat much slashed, and a round black hat, with a rich jewel.

Tuesday.

My project of going to the Opera is addled. I have got the rheumatism in my left arm, and cannot put on my coat. It is not the gout; I know his tooth too well to mistake his bite.

2258. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 10, 1782.

I am forced to write to you with Kirgate's pen, for though my right hand is better, the left is totally useless and muffled to above the elbow with my old biennial visitor, the gout. As he had out-stayed his term, I was in hopes that, like prelatic visitors, he would relax and relax till he totally forgot me: however, by being dilatory in his returns, I may, upon the whole, baulk him of one progress.

[2] Hon. Mary Monckton (1748–1840), daughter of first Viscount Galway; m. (1786), as his second wife, Edmund Boyle, seventh Earl of Cork. She was well known for her literary parties in imitation of those of Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Vesey.

[3] Hon. Richard Edgcumbe (1764–1839), styled Viscount Valletort, 1789–95; only son of first Viscount (afterwards first Earl of) Mount Edgcumbe, whom he succeeded in 1795.

[4] To judge from a portrait reproduced in Doyle's *Official Baronage* this seems to be Giles Bridges (1547–1594), third Baron Chandos.

I do not at all believe that there was a grain of partiality in my approbation of your ode: ask the other princes of Parnassus if I am apt to flatter them more than I do other highnesses. I shall certainly demand a copy from you, if I cannot get one otherwise, which I don't imagine will be difficult. Lady Jersey gave both odes to Mrs. Delany; and though I may see neither of them this month from my confinement, Lord and Lady Harcourt will be in town to-night, and to them I shall apply.

It will be no compliment to cede to you Dean Milles's huge book: I have not touched it this week, nor waded through the last hundred pages. You will find that I have scribbled a few short notes here and there in the margin, therefore don't let it go out of your own hands; but I am in no hurry for it, nor shall probably ever make use of them. Much less will I publish my own pamphlet, which might oblige me to say more; if you will, I am sure I shall be diverted; but as to curing the world of foolish credulity —nothing but a new deluge could effect it, and that for no long period. Nay, would one flap fools and leave the knaves in quiet? However, on some vigil of your nobler anger you may kill flies if you please.

I will send the book to the coach to-morrow, therefore you will inquire for it about the time of its arrival.

Mrs. Delany has lent me another most pleasing work of Mr. Gilpin—his *Essay on Forest Trees* considered in a picturesque light. It is perfectly new, truly ingenious, full of good sense in an agreeable style, and void of all affectation—sad recommendations to such times! Consequently, I suppose, it will not be published[1]! Adieu! I am in pain and tired.

LETTER 2258.—[1] Gilpin's *Remarks on Forest Scenery* appeared in 1790.

2259. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 12, 1782.

Your Ladyship will excuse my employing Kirgate, as I am not able to write myself. One would have thought that I had been too well acquainted with the gout's voice to mistake his accent for a stranger's; but, as the pain began on the inside of my elbow, I flattered myself that it was only rheumatic. Next morning I was cured of my mistake, and at present my poor lean hand is colossal. I have had much less pain than fever, but three restless nights have convinced me so much of my extreme weakness, that should the gout take a fancy, as it did some years ago, of making the grand tour of my person, I should little expect to get through it; indeed, I cannot now attempt even to dictate an answer to above one or two paragraphs in your Ladyship's letter: much less is my head clear enough to tell you the whole strange story of Mrs. Steuart. The family themselves neither are nor can ever be certain in their belief; but upon the whole it seems to me to have been a sudden fit of lunacy with which she had been afflicted.

Captain Waldegrave was so very obliging and good-natured as to call on me this morning, and I was happy to see him look so much better than I expected after all his vexations, disappointments, and illness. He talked of being at Ampthill I think on Monday next.

Doctor Dee's black stone was named in the catalogue of the collection of the Earls of Peterborough, whence it went to Lady Betty Germaine. She gave it to the last Duke of Argyle, and his son, Lord Frederic, to me,

H. W.

2260. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 17, 1782.

I have received yours of the 29th of last month, with that of Cav. Mozzi to you enclosed, and will answer to both in this as well as I can; though I have but one hand at liberty, having been confined these ten days by the gout in the other and its elbow. I am not void of all hopes that the fit will proceed no farther; and then, though my prison may last as much longer as it has done, I shall think myself very fortunate, for it will be the shortest fit I have had these ten years; nor am I young or fond enough of the world to pant after much liberty beyond that of my limbs.

You will be so good as to tell Cav. Mozzi that if it would be any satisfaction to him to write to me, I certainly could have no objection; nor would there be the least, unless, as the less connection there is between him and me, in the fairer light I shall stand in being impartial towards him. There would be great weight in what he says of Mr. Morrice and my consulting Mr. Duane, if I had never named him and he had not in consequence been rejected. I do not at once see that I could consult him after my Lord's lawyers have objected; though I think it so very irregular and indecent for Sharpe to have been the objector, that I am very far from saying I acquiesce. Indeed I am but talking in the air, till Mr. Morrice shall return from Bath, and of that I have not heard a word. No more have I from Lucas since I told you—in bad causes the aggressors are not impatient for decision. I adhere to my opinion, that much the best way to promote expedition, will be for Mr. Mozzi to come over himself—and I have no doubt but they will take care that the spring will not be too late.

There has been no public event since my last, but the

French purchase of St. Eustatia from our Governor of it[1]. What shame there is in that transaction the buyers, I suppose, will make over to the seller, unless the opposition borrow part of it for the ministers. The Parliament is to meet next week, and the town expects that, before that, Lord George Germaine's resignation[2] will be notified—not that I tell you he has resigned, but such is the universal persuasion; and the last symptom on which conjectures are formed is, that his family have said he would not be at the Queen's Birthday to-morrow. Your nephew, I conclude, will now come to town, and send you fresher and more authentic Parliamentary intelligence than I can.

We hear with some surprise of the Emperor's very rapid suffocation of nunneries. Do not the monks regret their helpmates, and tremble for themselves? If Cæsars could tremble, I should ask if Cæsar had no apprehension for himself. Are all the Jesuits extinct that dispatched poor Ganganelli[3]? Is not the Vatican hung with sackcloth? I suppose the next thing we shall hear will be, that those pillars of toleration, the King of Prussia and the Czarina, have opened asylums on the road for all those chaste doves that choose to cleave to their first spouse. The next century will most probably exhibit a very new era, which the close of this has been, and is, preparing. The annihilation of the Jesuits paved the way. Popery totters, though we preposterously stepped in to save it; but when old follies grow exploded, what can save them? not their own gibberish nor legerdemain, which gave them success. This is no impeachment to new impostures; but for the old, I would not answer how far the revolution may extend.

The enfranchisement of America will be another capital

LETTER 2260.—[1] Colonel Cockburn, to whose negligence the loss of the island (in Nov. 1781) was due. He was tried by court martial and cashiered.

[2] He was Secretary of State for the Colonies.

[3] Pope Clement XIV.

feature of the new era, and, sooner or later, will extend beyond British colonies. Whether mankind will be advantaged by these *bouleversemens*, I am not so clear; I mean, in their capacity of reason and liberty—charters seldom obtained and confirmed without much bloodshed. Soldiers, I fear, will not be laid aside, though priests may; and then what signifies whether one is chained or murdered by a fellow in a black coat, or a fellow in a red one?

18th.

Lord George Germaine has indubitably resigned, it is said, to be a peer; and that the office will not be filled up, its province being gone. His second tome has not been brilliant, but has made the first the more remembered—no advantage neither. What reasons he assigns for retirement I have not heard; his associates nor the public wished him to stay. The next chapter will be his principal enemy Lord Sandwich's, who has numerous foes too, but more friends.

2261. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 19, 1782.

I had seen in the papers the epigram your Ladyship has sent me to-day, and liked it so much, that I cut it out. Like well I did, too, the Ampthillian lines. It was the subject alone that I disapproved in them; and though you say I had no right to take exception, as there was no compliment to my roses and lilies, I do maintain that my complexion is likely to last as long as my fame, and, therefore, if I should have been in the right to be displeased at a compliment to the more durable of the two, I might justly protest against one to the shorter lived of the twain. Nay, as much as your Ladyship may disparage my looks (which I believe you did out of revenge), I have no doubt but the outside of my head will survive the inside;

and, therefore, as I may last till I am a fine man of my age, I beg you will let me enjoy what I can, instead of nursing me with visions of what I shall never attain.

It is my belief, though still a problem, that Lord George Germaine has resigned; which is signing his confession, at least, that America is lost. The King has had a violent bleeding at (his own) nose, which returned yesterday at the Drawing-room. Scarce any great ladies, except those immediately attached to the court, were at the Birthday, in resentment for not having been asked to the Queen's balls last year. Upon my word, I believe everybody will have spirit at last in England, except the two Houses of Parliament.

So Lord Ossory comes on Monday, and your Ladyship very early *next* winter!

2262. To the Earl of Buchan.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 26, 1782.

Your Lordship will forgive me if I make but a short answer to the honour of your last, as I write with difficulty, having but the use of one hand, the gout having disabled the other for these three weeks.

I do not know whether the pictures of James III and his Queen[1] remain at Kensington. I was told some years ago that his Majesty having ordered all his store-pictures to be assembled at that palace in order to select such as he should like to replace those at Windsor and Hampton Court, which he had sent to the Queen's House, did give the residue to the then Lord Chamberlain and his deputy. I can easily know from Mrs. Loyd the housekeeper whether the portraits of the Scottish King and Queen remain there; and I can as

Letter 2262.—Collated with original in British Museum.

[1] Margaret, daughter of Christian, King of Denmark.

easily obtain from the present Lord Chamberlain permission for your Lordship to have them copied; but that cannot be done without payment of fees to the officers of the Chamberlain's office, and which it does not depend on Lord Hertford to dispense with, as they have a right, and none of the royal pictures are granted to be copied otherwise.

The Lady Arabella Stuart is not at Devonshire House, my Lord, but at the Duke of Portland's at Welbeck. If I said otherwise I misinformed your Lordship. I have a copy of it in water-colours by Vertue, which your Lordship's painter shall copy if you please; there is also an old print of her, but extremely scarce. I have one, and there is another in the collection of English heads, which Lord Mountstuart purchased of Mr. Bull.

I have had my two volumes of *Royal and Noble Authors* bound at your Lordship's command, and they shall be sent if your Lordship will please to tell me by what conveyance. I forget whether I thought anything else of mine might be acceptable too—but I had rather forget than be vain or impertinent. I have the honour to be, with great respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2263. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 27, 1782.

For these three weeks I have had the gout in my left elbow and hand, and can yet but just bear to lay the latter on the paper while I write with the other. However, this is no complaint; for it is the shortest fit I have had these sixteen years, and with trifling pain: therefore, as the fits decrease, it does ample honour to my bootikins, regimen, and method. Next to the bootikins, I ascribe much credit to a diet-drink

of dock-roots, of which Dr. Turton asked me for the receipt, as the best he had ever seen, and which I will send you if you please. It came from an old physician at Richmond, who did amazing service with it in inveterate scurvies, the parents, or ancestors at least, I believe, of all gouts. Your fit I hope is quite gone.

Mr. Gough has been with me—I never saw a more dry, or more cold gentleman. He told me his new plan is a series of English monuments. I do like the idea; and offered to lend him drawings for it.

I have seen Mr. Stevens too, who is much more flowing. I wish you had told me it was the editor of Shakespeare, for, on his mentioning Dr. Farmer, I launched out and said, he was by much the most rational of Shakespeare's commentators, and had given the only sensible account of the authors our great poet had consulted. I really meant those who wrote before Dr. Farmer. Mr. Stevens seemed a little surprised, which made me discover the blunder I had made, for which I was very sorry, though I had meant nothing by it—however, don't mention it. I hope he has too much sense to take it ill, as he must have seen I had no intention of offending him—on the contrary, that my whole behaviour marked a desire of being civil to him as your friend, in which light only you had named him to me. Pray, take no notice of it, though I could not help mentioning it, as it lies on my conscience to have been even undesignedly and indirectly unpolite to anybody you recommend. I should not, I trust, have been so unintentionally to anybody, nor with intention, unless provoked to it by great folly or dirtiness. Adieu! my good Sir.

Yours sincerely,

H. W.

2264. To Earl Harcourt.

Friday night, late.

Though I am infinitely obliged to your Lordship for so readily undertaking to make peace, I shall have no occasion to trouble you, unless you should by mere accident have an opportunity of softening the reception—for Mr. C.[1] and Lady A.[2] have taken the matter with the utmost good humour and good sense, and neither of them care a straw whether they are received a little better or a little worse—all the difference will be that the latter will make them go the seldomer. He is not aiming to be Prime Minister by the House of Commons, and still less by Cumb. House[3]. It would be well if everybody had as little pride, and had had as little ambition.

Your Lordship's most devoted,
H. Walpole.

2265. To Edmond Malone.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 4, 1782.

You have made me a very valuable present, Sir, for which I was earnestly wishing, as your criticisms are far too good to be committed only to the few hours of life of a newspaper[1]. You have produced many new and very forcible arguments against the champions of Rowley, and pointed their own artillery against them victoriously. Indeed, I wonder so acute a writer as Mr. Bryant could relax into so many assumptions; but when he set out with begging the question that Rowley wrote in all sorts of

Letter 2264.—[1] General Conway.
[2] Lady Ailesbury.
[3] Cumberland House.

Letter 2265. — [1] Malone commented on Bryant's book in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1782, and republished his remarks as *Cursory Observations on the Poems attributed to Thomas Rowley, a priest of the fifteenth century.*

provincial dialects (which a monk confined to his convent was of all men the least likely to be conversant in), I do not believe he expected that you would discover that Rowley not only employed every *patois*, but the language of two entire centuries. This is foiling him at his own weapons. So you have in the specimens you have produced of commencements of such a series of old poems both prior and subsequent to the supposed era, and which no more resemble the modulation of the imaginary Rowley, than the first leathern waggons that were called coaches, are like to a modern varnished chariot. In fact, if there is any such discriminating faculty in us, by which we distinguish between the hobble of a rhymer of the fifteenth century and a poet of the eighteenth, we cannot be in doubt a moment.

Mr. Bryant and Dr. Milles have in vain resorted to the fastnesses of uncouth old story, as the Welsh did into the precipices of Wales, and thought nobody would follow them but such persevering climbers into the clouds as themselves; yet, Sir, you have baffled them there too; and I own I am flattered that the same argument struck me in a letter I wrote to Mr. Cole, of Milton, on the first publication of Mr. Bryant's book, namely, that the MS. the most likely to be found in one of Canning's six chests, was a diary—nay, I find since that, that there was such a diary by Turgot.

Of all the forgeries, the most preposterous to be sure is that of *Canning's Cabinet of Curiosities*; the poor lad, before he came to London, might be ignorant enough to write it; but ignorance is not a term coarse enough for any one past fifteen, who can swallow so gross and clumsy an imposture. A picture by Vandyck in that collection, as you say, Sir, could not augment the absurdity, it is already so complete; nor is any man who credits it fit to be reasoned with.

It would be flattering him with seeming to take him for a rational being.

I observed the other day in the first volume of the *Biographia Dramatica* that Mr. Thomas Broughton, who wrote in the *Biog. Britannica,* was possessed of the cure of St. Mary Redcliffe in 1744, and was buried in that church in 1774. Is it credible that so literary a man should have never heard of the famous MSS.? He wrote a play, too, and consequently was something of a poet—and yet did he never take the least notice of such treasures! Is it possible that he never should have heard of them, though they passed into so many hands? Mr. Broughton lived between the period when Vertue copied the painter's bill, and that in which Chatterton first saw this mine of poetry.

I beg your pardon, Sir, for troubling you with so long a letter. I intended only to thank you—but the pleasure your book gave me—in which I fear your kindness to me had a little share too—drew me into a conversation beyond what was fair.

I have the honour to be,
With great gratitude and respect,
Sir,
Your most obedient humble servant,
HOR. WALPOLE.

2266. To SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 7, 1782.

I ANTICIPATED Lord George Germaine's exit before it was complete: nay, it is not yet, though imminent. It is not, I believe, entirely a voluntary act, much less a disgrace, but merely the effect of disagreement with some of his colleagues; consequently, I should think, would not produce much variation of measures, as Lord George did not certainly

resist such as made his court best. That he was no unwelcome servant is plain, as he is to be a Viscount[1]; and his nephew, the Duke of Dorset, succeeds Lord Falmouth[2], who is just dead, as Captain of the Band of Pensioners. Mr. Ellis is to be Secretary of State in the room of Lord George.

If your nephew has written to you lately, you will have seen that I had no event to tell of any public notoriety. There have been some ineffectual efforts at opposition in both Houses, and not very remarkable. Nor do I imagine that the prosecution of Lord Sandwich in the House of Commons will have any serious termination. Lord Cornwallis is arrived, and that man of wretched fame, Arnold. There was something of humour mixed with the severity which the Americans meditated for him, had they taken him in his passage, as they attempted and were near doing. They intended to cut off his leg, which had been wounded in their service, and bury it with military honours, and then hang the rest of his person. I think he cannot do better now than consort with General Paoli.

There has been lately the most dreadful catastrophe in the City of which I ever heard or read. A stationer's wife, a very fond mother, went up, as she did constantly, to see her children in bed. She had seven, the eldest not nine years old. By some strange inadvertence, she left a candle near a curtain of one of the beds. It caught; the house was burnt, and every one of the poor babes! Lady Molesworth's tragedy[3] was not so horrid, for she was so happy as to be consumed too. These poor parents are both alive.

I think, when I wrote last, I was confined with the gout. It has proved the slightest fit I have had for many years,

LETTER 2266. — [1] He was created on Feb. 11, 1782, Viscount Sackville, of Drayton.

[2] Hugh Boscawen, second Viscount Falmouth.

[3] See letter to Conway of May 6, 1763, and that to Mann of May 10, 1763.

was only in my left hand and elbow, and did not last a month; yet both my hands are terribly afflicted with chalk-stones. However, it is plain that my bootikins, regimen, temperance and perseverance in my cold system have prodigiously lessened my sufferings; and, if I live to an hundred, I suppose I shall be a very healthy young fellow. Still, I do not intend to cut my colt's-tooth till past ninety. So far from juvenile airs, I lead a most recluse life, and scarcely ever go into any public, indeed only to very private places, except what I cannot avoid, the public nights at Gloucester House, and they are not very numerous. I have been once to the Opera to hear the Allegranti, whom I like, and who is almost as much in fashion as Vestris the dancer was last year: the applause to her is rather greater. Pacchierotti is much admired too, and the dancers are a capital set. So you see we bear our disgraces with eminent philosophy. Pleasure does not seem to know that there is any want of money, or weight of taxes. I have not heard from you long. I expect you to tell me a great deal of the Pope's lamentations. To be sure, the Great Duke does not compliment him with a suppression of your carnival.

Friday, 8th.

The inquiry on Lord Sandwich died suddenly this morning, at three o'clock, of a vote of approbation of 208 to 183.

The Duke de Chartres[4] is going to Constantinople. It was asked, why? Answer—*Pour apprendre à être grand seigneur.*

We have a report that Minorca is taken: had the news arrived a few hours sooner, it might have been thrown into the vote of approbation.

[4] Louis Philippe Joseph, only son of the Duc d'Orléans, whom he succeeded in 1785. *Walpole.*

2267. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 7, 1782.

I expected that you would at least acknowledge the receipt of Dr. Milles: I can tell you that if you will not stir a finger to encourage me, mine grow so very helpless that they will soon resign their pen like more puissant secretaries, and a little more willingly. This fit of mine was very short, not a whole month—what care you? but it has left such weakness and so many chalk eggs that my sufferings are far from eased. The Dean and Mr. Bryant are not received with such implicit deference as I concluded they would meet. Many pens are whetting. A Mr. Malone has published some strong criticisms on them, but unluckily has attempted humour, which is not an antiquary's weapon.

Well! after a fortnight's suspense it is certain that Lord George Germain is to resign and to be a Viscount. Don't imagine that *otium cum dignitate* was his own choice, still less his master's; and still less is that a sacrifice to a ruined nation. No, it is a mere cabal, an effort of a faction, whose fears first dictated it. During the recess the Lord Advocate[1] wrote to Lord North that he could not serve any longer with Lord George, and the letter was delivered not unwillingly. The writer hoped to succeed the proscribed. The letter was exceedingly ill received, and Lord George was much pressed to remain; nay, this day sevennight the Lord Advocate was not spoken to. However, as mighty emperors must submit now and then to their janissaries, *Starvation* himself is rewarded for this closet insurrection with the place of Treasurer of the Navy (6,000*l.* per year) in the room of old Ellis (*ready for all posts*), who is made Secretary

Letter 2267.—[1] Henry Dundas.

of State for late America. Dr. Warton will wish himself joy, who in his new volume on Pope had just said that the poet would be happy if he knew that his pleasant villa is occupied by a *man of such virtue, learning, and taste.* I should think not, if one may judge of what he said on much such another transfer of property,—

> And Helmsley, once proud Buckingham's delight,
> Slides to a Scrivener, or a City Knight.

It is very diverting to hear how the courtiers *now* rail at Lord George, as if this was the moment of his greatest criminality!—in short, the treachery and the rewards both to the traitor and to the betrayed are of a piece, and constitute no new æra.

Anything is preferable to such politics; I am sure two good stories are: here they are. T'other night at Brooks's the conversation turned on Lord Falkland; Fitzpatrick said he was a very weak man, and owed his fame to Lord Clarendon's partiality. Charles Fox was sitting in a deep reverie, with his knife in his hand. 'There,' continued Fitzpatrick, 'I might describe Charles meditating on his ruin of his country, ingeminating the words Peace! Peace[2]! and ready to plunge the knife in his own bosom.'—'Yes,' rejoined Hare, in the same ironic dolorous tone, 'and he would have done so, but happening to look on the handle of the knife, he saw it was silver, and put it in his pocket.' The other is an anecdote more fit to rank with the former part of my letter. Sir John Hawkins told it to me last Sunday. When Dr. Johnson was at work on his Shake-

[2] Clarendon writes of Falkland:—'When there was any overture or hope of peace, he would be more erect and vigorous, and exceedingly solicitous to press anything which he thought might promote it; and sitting among his friends, often, after a deep silence and frequent sighs, would, with a shrill and sad accent, ingeminate the word *Peace, Peace*; and would passionately profess, "that the very agony of the war, and the view of the calamities and desolation the kingdom did and must endure, took his sleep from him, and would shortly break his heart."'

speare, Sir John said to him, 'Well! Doctor, now you have finished your *Dictionary*, I suppose you will labour your present work *con amore* for your reputation.' 'No, Sir,' said Johnson, 'nothing excites a man to write but necessity.' This was but the text—now for the illustration. A clergyman told Sir John very lately, that being with Johnson, he said to him, 'Doctor, you have such command of your pen you can do anything: I wish you would write me a sermon.' 'No, Sir,' said the mercenary; 'I cannot write but for money; since I have dealt with the heathens (the booksellers), I have no other inspiration. I knew they could not do without me, and I made them pay five guineas a sheet for my *Rasselas*[3]; you must pay me if I write for you'; and the five guineas per sheet no doubt was the price. But I do not know why he called the booksellers *heathens*, unless for their worshipping such an uncouth idol as he is: yet he has other motives than lucre,—prejudice, and bigotry, and pride, and presumption, and arrogance, and pedantry are the hags that brew his ink, though wages alone supply him with paper.

How could you forget to tell me of Mr. Whitehead's verses on Nuneham; I am charmed with them. They are the best he ever wrote except *Variety*.

They say you do not come to town this winter. I am not surprised; your friends here do not seem to be much in your thoughts!

Friday.

I had not sealed my letter, so can add a paragraph or two. The House of Commons sat till three this morning, when they voted that the conduct of the navy last year had been the most perfect imaginable; however, there were

[3] *Rasselas* was written by Johnson to defray the expense of his mother's funeral and to pay what small debts she left. He received 100*l.*, and 25*l.* more when the second edition was published.

183 dissentients to 208 admirers. I suppose people will be so silly as to expect such a minority will increase, yet I dare to say that on next vote they will not be above forty.

The Duc de Chartres has made Madame de Genlis[4] *gouverneur de ses enfans*; why should not Madame de Schwellenberg be governor to the Prince, and Bishop Hurd wet-nurse? If you love imperial logic, pray read the Emperor's rescript on the suppression of Popery; it is a model of reasoning that may be applied to the restoration of Popery here, for it shows that everything *tient uniquement de la volonté libre et arbitraire des Princes de la terre*—did you ever see so happy an union as that of *libre* and *arbitraire*?

2268. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 9, 1782.

Lord Ossory says that your Ladyship complains of my not writing; but he could have told you that I have scarce an inch of finger left; one of those with which I am now writing is but recovering of a new explosion of chalk. I believe they look, in little, like the channels of lava from Vesuvius. Indeed, when our Lord is in town, you know it is my compact not to write. He lives at Brooks's, where politics are sown, and in the House of Commons, where they come up. I go scarce anywhere, see few people, and know nothing of the new generations that have been hatched since I went to roost. When I do write, if I had not a sovereign command over my pen, I should talk of nothing but my own caducity, which, as if one's country was a something of which one is part, keeps pace with the

[4] Félicité Ducrest (1746-1830), m. (1762) Alexandre Brûlart, Comte de Genlis. He was afterwards Marquis de Sillery, but his wife continued to be known as Comtesse de Genlis.

body politic, and loses a joint or a faculty every month. As I have not recovered the use of my left hand, so Great Britain is losing her right one, Lord George Germaine.—Yet, I suppose, like Widdrington in *Chevy Chase*, she will continue fighting on upon her stumps, Lords Stormont and Hillsborough; nay, what may she not recover with the semblance of a new Secretary, who has all the activity of an Aulic counsellor, the circumstantial minuteness of a churchwarden, and the vigour of another Methusalem! Even the respectable Ellis! what enterprises will be set on foot by this dashing old Parr and his contemporary, my Lord President Jenkins[1]! Well, I shall expect to be sent for, since the empire is to be recovered by antediluvians.

Our Lord, to be sure, has told you, Madam, how, in one day, one culprit[2] was whitewashed in one House, and another blackened[3] in the other. I do not approve the treatment of the latter: the courtiers are ready enough to vilify him, now he is fallen; but the opposition never hit on a right scent; like mongrels, they only worry hunted game. If they were true bull-dogs, they would fasten on that bloody caitiff, the Lord Advocate, who proposed, *en passant*, to starve five thousand fishermen and their families[4], as a

LETTER 2268.—[1] Earl Bathurst, then in his sixty-eighth year; Mr. Ellis was in his sixty-ninth. Henry Jenkins, to whom Walpole compares the former, died in 1670, and claimed to have been born in 1501.

[2] Lord Sandwich.

[3] On Feb. 8 'Lord Carmarthen made a very extraordinary motion. It was to come to a resolution, that it was derogatory to the honour of the House that any person labouring under a heavy censure of a court martial should be recommended to the crown to be raised to the dignity of the peerage. This was directly levelled at Lord George Sackville Germaine, whom, on quitting the seals, the King had consented to create a peer; indeed, if there could have been any doubt of the application, Lord Carmarthen cleared it away by reading the identical words of the sentence that had been passed on Lord George after the battle of Minden, twenty-two years before: the distance of the time sufficed to point out the ill-nature of the motion, which was generally condemned and justly rejected by the majority of the Lords.' (*Last Journals*, vol. ii. pp. 495–6.)

[4] In 1775, when he had been strongly in favour of the bill for restricting the trade of the colonies.

preliminary, and has now got 6,000*l.* a year for condemning the American war, which, I suppose, he will now promote again, as advantageous to his new post; and then we fast[5] to beg a blessing on such wars and such war-makers! When Lord North told Lord George Germaine that he must go out, he replied, shrewdly, 'And pray, my Lord, why are you to stay?' undoubtedly for his modesty and philosophy. When one of the subscribers to his new loan asked him if we were near peace, he replied, 'A year nearer than we were, and a year nearer to destruction.' I hope our historians, Sir John Dalrymple and Macpherson, will parallel this indifference with that of the Roman magistrates, who expected the Gauls in their curule chairs in the forum. Our dictator would be less sad. Cannot you figure him, Madam, in the midst of St. James's Market[6], not in a curule, but a very easy chair, with a circle of butchers round him, splitting their sides with laughing at his jokes, and telling them it was true he had undone them, but should continue a good customer still, whoever should be their or his master; it was all one to Punch?

2269. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 14, 1782.

I have received such treasures from you, dear Sir, through the channel of Mr. Nichols, that I neither know how to thank you, nor to find time to peruse them so fast as I am impatient to do. You must complete your kindness by letting me detain them a few days, till I have gone through them, when I will return them most carefully by the same intervention; and particularly the curious piece of enamel; for though you are, as usual, generous enough to offer it to

[5] A public Fast was observed on February 8.

[6] West of the Haymarket, about midway between Charles and Jermyn Streets.

me, I have plundered you too often already—and indeed I have room left for nothing more, nor have that miserly appetite of continuing to hoard what I cannot enjoy, nor have much time left to possess.

I have already looked into your beautiful illuminated MS. copied from Dr. Stukeley's letter, and with anecdotes of the antiquaries of Bennet College; and I have found therein so many charming instances of your candour, humility and justice, that I grieve to deprive Mr. Gough for a minute even of the possession of so valuable a tract. I will not injure him or it, by begging you to cancel what relates to me, as it would rob you of part of your defence of Mr. Baker. If I wish to have it detained from Mr. Gough till the period affixed in the first leaf, or rather to my death, which will probably precede yours, it is for this reason only; Mr. Gough is apt, as we antiquaries are, to be impatient to tell the world all he knows, which, unluckily, is much more than the world is at all impatient of knowing. For what you call *your flaming zeal*, I do not in the least object to it. We have agreed to tolerate each other, and certainly are neither of us infallible. I think, on what we differ most is, your calling *my* opinions *fashionable*—they were when we took them up—I doubt it is yours that are most in fashion now, at least in this country. The Emperor seems to be of *our* party—but, if I like his notions, I do not admire his judgement, which is too precipitate to *be* judgement.

I smiled at Mr. Gough's idea of my declining his acquaintance as a member of that *obnoxious* Society of Antiquaries.—It is their folly alone that is obnoxious to me, and can they help that?—I shall very cheerfully assist him.

I am glad you are undeceived about the controversial piece in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which I should have assured you, as you now know, that it was not mine. I declared, *in my Defence*, that I would publish nothing

more about that question. I have not, nor intend it. Neither was it I that wrote the prologue to *The Count of Narbonne*, but Mr. Jephson himself. On the opposite page I will add the receipt for the diet-drink—as to my regimen, I shall not specify it. Not only you would not adopt it, but I should tremble to have you. In fact, I never do prescribe it, as I am persuaded it would kill the strongest man in England, who was not exactly of the same temperament with me, and who had not embraced it early. It consists in temperance in quantity, as to eating—I do not mind the quality; but I am persuaded that great abstinence with the gout is dangerous: for, if one does not take nutriment enough, there cannot be strength sufficient to fling out the gout, and then it deviates to palsies. But my great nostrum is the use of cold water, inwardly and outwardly, on all occasions, and total disregard of precaution against catching cold. A hat you know I never wear, my breast I never button, nor wear great-coats, &c. I have often had the gout in my face (as last week) and eyes, and instantly dip my head in a pail of cold water, which always cures it, and does not send it anywhere else. All this I dare do, because I have done so these forty years, weak as I look—but Milo would not have lived a week if he had played such pranks. My diet-drink is not all of so Quixote a disposition; and any of the faculty will tell you how innocent it is, at least. In a few days, for I am a rapid reader when I like my matter, I will return all your papers and letters, and in the meantime thank you most sincerely for the use of them, and am

Your ever obliged,
H. Walpole.

P.S. My old friend, and your acquaintance, Mr. Dodd[1],

Letter 2269.—[1] John Dodd, of Swallowfield, Berkshire, M.P. for Reading.

died last Sunday—not of cold water. He and I were born on the very same day, but took to different elements. I doubt he had hurt his fortune as well as health.

2270. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 14, 1782.

Your letter and mine must have passed each other incog.; for we wrote at the same time, but mine was directed to Aston, where I thought you. It may wait, for there was nothing in it that called for dispatch or answer. Yours was more welcome, for it promised your coming, though not speedily, and a good effect from Dr. Milles. I had a good pretence for sending for Mr. Nichols himself, as he is to bring me a parcel from Mr. Cole, and he has promised to come with it himself. I had instructed Kirgate to sift him, but he only replied in general that answers are expected from Mr. Warton, Mr. Steevens, and others. I shall keep this back till I have seen him.

I want you to send me a correct copy of your replicatory ode to the Duchess of Devonshire. I have at last, after some years of solicitation, prevailed on Lady Harcourt's modesty to allow me to print a small number of copies of some of her poems. As this is to be a favourite impression, and would of itself be too slender, and yet is not to be profaned with miscellaneous indifferents, I shall add Mr. Whitehead's *Nuneham*, and (to introduce *your* ode) the Duchess's, if the Duke will consent. She does, but he hesitates. I have always wished that Strawberry should be honoured by something of yours, and here it will be with good company and friends. I might have been dignified by reprinting Lord Hardwicke's ponderous volume of Sir Dudley Carleton, a favour the miser offered me to save himself the expense, but I was brutal enough to refuse it.

Lord Carmarthen has not captivated the goodwill of the world by his late attack on the new peer[1]. It was ill-timed; nor was that temple of honour and virtue so unpolluted as to be liable to contamination: one thing the insult proved, the servility of the whole military profession who had not been so squeamish.

I forgot to tell you what perhaps you had not heard. Washington is remarkably silent and serious, and when he banqueted his prisoner Lord Cornwallis, spoke little, never smiled, but happening to ask if it was true that Lord Dunmore was returning to resume his government of Virginia, and being answered in the affirmative, the hero burst out into a fit of laughter. This was the philosopher laughing at the ass that has left mumbling *thistles* for clover that is out of his reach.

I dined on Monday with the Harcourts at Mrs. Montagu's new palace[2], and was much surprised. Instead of vagaries, it is a noble simple edifice. When I came home, I recollected that though I had thought it so magnificent a house, there was not a morsel of gilding. It is grand, not tawdry, nor larded and embroidered and pomponned with shreds and remnants, and *clinquant* like all the harlequinades of Adam, which never let the eye repose a moment.

From architecture it is natural for me to slide to *Anecdotes of Painting*. There is a new genius, one Opy[3], a Cornish lad of nineteen, who has taught himself to colour in a strong, bold, masterly style, by studying nature, and painting from beggars and poor children. He has done a head of Mrs. Delany for the King—*oui vraiment*, it is pronounced like Rembrandt, but as I told her, it does not look older than she is, but older than she does.

Letter 2270.—[1] See note 3 on letter to Lady Ossory of Feb. 9, 1782.
[2] At the north-west corner of Portman Square.
[3] John Opie (1761–1807).

My next anecdote is only to introduce a *bon mot.* A man, I forget his name, has made a drawing, which he says is for a companion to Copley's 'Death of Lord Chatham.' As the latter exhibits all the great men of Britain, this is to record the beauties: but what do you think is the subject he has pitched upon? the *daughter of Pharaoh* saving Moses. The Princess Royal is the Egyptian infanta, accompanied by the Duchesses of Gloucester, Cumberland, Devonshire, Rutland, Lady Duncannon, &c., not all beauties. Well, this sketch is to be seen *over against Brooks's.* George Selwyn says he could recommend a better companion for this piece, which should be *the sons of Pharaoh* (faro) at the opposite house.

Friday, 15th.

Mr. Nichols has been with me, and told me that a person whom he did not name, is known to have furnished some material parchment to Chatterton, which will be disclosed in Mr. Warton's answer to Bryant and Milles. I did not care to be more particularly inquisitive, lest Nichols should have suspected that I wanted to anticipate this discovery myself, but as Mr. Warton is to publish soon, I will give you the earliest notice of what he shall produce.

You have flattered me I doubt with false hopes of your coming in the spring, for Lord Harcourt says you told him in the same breath that you should not come. I am pleased at least that you know I am so interested in your coming, that you think it necessary to deceive me. You used to say that the Lord of Aston[4] made you dislike London, does its present Lord make you prefer Aston?

The Bishop of Bristol[5] is dead. We shall know who preached the most fulsome sermon on the late Fast by the nomination of the successor. Our high priests do not

[4] The Earl of Holdernesse, Mason's former patron.
[5] Dr. Thomas Newton.

abstain from flesh, but in the true Mosaic spirit recommend *letting out blood.*

Adieu! I hate you absent, but I will love you again prodigiously if you will come.

2271. To the Rev. William Cole.

Feb. 15, 1782.

I was so impatient to peruse all the literary stores you sent me, dear Sir, that I stayed at home on purpose to give up a whole evening to them. I have gone through all, your own manuscript, which I envy Mr. Gough, his specimen, and the four letters to you from the latter and Mr. Steevens. I am glad they were both satisfied with my reception. In truth, you know I am neither formal nor austere, nor have any grave aversion to our antiquaries, though I do now and then divert myself with their solemnity about errant trifles—yet perhaps we owe much to their thinking those trifles of importance, or the Lord knows how they would have patience to investigate them so indefatigably. Mr. Steevens seemed pleasant, but I doubt I shall never be demure enough to conciliate Mr. Gough. Then I have a wicked quality in an antiquary, nay, one that annihilates the essence: that is, I cannot bring myself to a habit of minute accuracy about very indifferent points.

I do not doubt but there is a swarm of diminutive inaccuracies in my *Anecdotes*—well! if there is, I bequeath free leave of correction to the microscopic intellects of my continuators. I took dates and facts from the sedulous and faithful Vertue, and piqued myself on little but on giving an idea of the spirit of the times with regard to the arts at the different periods.

The specimen you sent me of Mr. Gough's detail of our monuments is very differently treated; proves vast industry,

and shows most circumstantial fidelity. It extends, too, much farther than I expected, for it seems to embrace the whole mass of our monuments, nay, of some that are vanished. It is not what I thought, an intention of representing the succession of our modes of dress, from figures on monuments, but rather a history of our tombs. It is fortunate, though he may not think so, that so many of the more ancient are destroyed, since for three or four centuries they were clumsy, rude, and ugly. I know I am but a fragment of an antiquary, for I abhor all Saxon doings, and whatever did not exhibit some taste, grace, or elegance, and some ability in the artists. Nay, if I may say so to you, I do not care a straw for archbishops, bishops, mitred abbots, and cross-legged knights. When you have one of a sort, you have seen all. However, to so superficial a *student in antiquity* as I am, Mr. Gough's work is not unentertaining. It has frequently anecdotes and circumstances of kings, queens, and historic personages, that interest me, though I care not a straw about a series of bishops who had only Christian names, or were removed from one old church to a newer. Still I shall assist Mr. Gough with whatever he wants in my possession. I believe he is a very worthy man, and I should be a churl not to oblige any man who is so innocently employed. I have felt the selfish, the proud avarice of those who hoard literary curiosities for themselves alone, as other misers do money.

I observed in your account of the Count-Bishop Hervey, that you call one of his dedicators Martin Sherlock, Esq. That Mr. Sherlock is an Irish clergyman; I am acquainted with him. He is a very amiable good-natured man, and wants judgement, not parts. He is a little damaged by aiming at Sterne's capricious pertness, which the original wore out: and which, having been admired and cried up to the skies by foreign writers of reviews, was, on the contrary,

too severely treated by our own. That injustice shocked Mr. Sherlock, who has a good heart and much simplicity, and sent him in dudgeon last year to Ireland, determined to write no more—yet I am persuaded he will, so strong is his propensity to being an author—and if he does, correction may make him more attentive to what he says and writes. He has no gall; on the contrary, too much benevolence in his indiscriminate praise—but he has made many ingenious criticisms. He is a just, a due enthusiast to Shakespeare—but, alas! he scarce likes Richardson less. Pray, would it be possible to get a print of Mr. Cooper by Mr. Tyson, mentioned in your MS. p. 45?—Beware!—do not plunge into your natural generosity, and say, 'I have *one* at your service.'—You have put me on my guard against your bountiful spirit. I vow solemnly I will not accept *an only one*; nor without this vow would I have named it.

There is another favour I am inclined to ask, but upon condition too, that you refuse it, if you have the least objection. I have a curiosity to see what the Count-Bishop and Wilkes wrote in an album you mention in p. 52. It is merely a curiosity to *see* them. I give you my honour I will return your transcript without transcribing it. Yet decline my request, if it is not agreeable to you.

The first moment I can spare a servant to send into the City, all your papers written and printed, and the enamel, shall be conveyed to Mr. Nichols, everything but the two prints of Mr. Br. Willis, for which I thank you. Mr. Nichols has been with me himself—he is a very modest, intelligent man. Now I have done with writing, and am pretty sick of the world and the great world, I have less objection to amusing myself with writers. They divert me, when I have nothing to read, especially as I have little to do. Adieu!

Yours most sincerely,

H. W.

P.S. Saturday 16.—The parcel for you will go this evening to Mr. Nichols; so you will inquire for it at the Rose next week.

2272. To the Rev. William Mason.

[1782?]

I have been reading a new French translation of the elder Pliny, of whom I never read but scraps before; because, in the poetical manner in which we learn Latin at Eton, we never become acquainted with the names of the commonest things, too undignified to be admitted into verse; and, therefore, I never had patience to search in a dictionary for the meaning of every substantive. I find I shall not have a great deal less trouble with the translation, as I am not more familiar with their common *drogues* than with the Latin. However, the beginning goes off very glibly, as I am not yet arrived below the planets: but do you know that this study, of which I have never thought since I learnt astronomy at Cambridge, has furnished me with some very entertaining ideas! I have long been weary of the common jargon of poetry. You bards have exhausted all the nature we are acquainted with; you have treated us with the sun, moon, and stars, the earth and the ocean, mountains and valleys, &c., &c., under every possible aspect. In short, I have longed for some American poetry, in which I might find new appearances of nature, and consequently of art.

But my present excursion into the sky has afforded me more entertaining prospects, and newer phenomena. If I was as good a poet as you are, I would immediately compose an idyl, or an elegy, the scene of which should be laid in Saturn or Jupiter; and then, instead of a niggardly soliloquy by the light of a single moon, I would describe a night illuminated by four or five moons at least, and they

should be all in a perpendicular or horizontal line, according as Celia's eyes (who probably in that country has at least two pair) are disposed in longitude or latitude. You must allow that this system would diversify poetry amazingly.—And then Saturn's belt! which the translator says in his notes, is not round the planet's waist, like the shingles; but is a globe of crystal that encloses the whole orb, as you may have seen an enamelled watch in a case of glass. If you do not perceive what infinitely pretty things may be said, either in poetry or romance, on a brittle heaven of crystal, and what furbelowed rainbows they must have in that country, you are neither the Ovid nor natural philosopher I take you for.

Pray send me an eclogue directly upon this plan; and I give you leave to adopt my idea of Saturnian Celias having their everything quadrupled—which would form a much more entertaining rhapsody than Swift's thought of magnifying or diminishing the species in his *Gulliver*. How much more execution a fine woman would do with two pair of *piercers*! or four! and how much longer the honeymoon would last, if both the sexes have (as no doubt they have) four times the passions, and four times the means of gratifying them!

I have opened new worlds to you.—You must be four times the poet you are, and then you will be above Milton, and equal to Shakespeare, the only two mortals I am acquainted with who ventured beyond the visible diurnal sphere, and preserved their intellects. Dryden himself would have talked nonsense, and, I fear, indecency, on my plan; but you are too good a divine, I am sure, to treat my quadruple love but platonically. In Saturn, notwithstanding their glass-case, they are supposed to be very cold; but platonic love of itself produces frigid conceits enough, and you need not augment the dose.—But I will not dictate.

The subject is new; and you, who have so much imagination, will shoot far beyond me. Fontenelle would have made something of the idea, even in prose; but Algarotti would dishearten anybody from attempting to meddle with the system of the universe a second time[1] in a genteel dialogue. Good night! I am going to bed.—Mercy on me! if I should dream of Celia with four times the usual attractions!

2273. To the Rev. William Cole.

Feb. 22, 1782.

I doubt you are again in error, my good Sir, about the letter in the *Gentleman's Magazine* against the Rowleians, unless Mr. Malone sent it to you, for he is the author, and not Mr. Steevens, from whom I imagine you received it. There is a report that some part of Chatterton's forgery is to be produced from an accomplice—but this I do not answer for, nor know the circumstances. I have scarce seen a person who is not persuaded that the *fashion* of the poems was Chatterton's own, though he might have found some old stuff to work upon, which very likely was the case; but now that the poems have been so much examined, nobody (that has an ear) can get over the modernity of the modulation, and the recent cast of the ideas and phraseology, corroborated by such palpable pillage of Pope and Dryden. Still the boy remains a prodigy, by whatever means he procured or produced the edifice he erected—and still it will be inexplicable how he found time or materials for operating such miracles.

You are in another error about Sir Harry Englefield[1], who

Letter 2272.—[1] Algarotti wrote a series of dialogues on Newton's philosophy entitled *Newtonianismo per le dame*.

Letter 2273.—[1] Sir Henry Charles Englefield (1752–1822), seventh Baronet. He died unmarried.

cannot be going to marry a daughter of Lord Cadogan, unless he has a natural one, of whom I never heard. Lord Cadogan had no daughter by his first wife, and his eldest girl by my niece[2] is not five years old.

The act of the Emperor to which I alluded, is the general destruction of convents in Flanders, and, I suppose, in his German dominions too. The Pope suppressed the Carnival, as mourning, and proposes a journey to Vienna to implore mercy. This is a little different from the time when the Pontiffs trod on the necks of emperors, and called it trampling *super aspidem et draconem.*

I hope you have received your cargo back undamaged. I was much obliged to you, and am

Yours ever,
H. W.

2274. To the Rev. William Mason.

Feb. 23, 1782.

The power of the crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished: very true, and it is diminished, a good deal indeed, if it valued the extent to which its rays used to extend. Well, but it does not dart its influence so hotly when on that spot that was wont to reflect its beams with so little refraction. Lord Sandwich escaped on Wednesday but by a plurality of nineteen, and last night the American war survived but by one vote[1], which will not save its life, for even the vigorous and enterprising young Ellis will not dare to cross the Rubicon, when he

[2] The daughter of Horace Walpole's sister, Lady Mary Churchill.

Letter 2274. — [1] On Feb. 22 General Conway moved 'to implore his Majesty to listen to the advice of his Commons, that the war in America might no longer be pursued, for the impracticable purpose of reducing the inhabitants of that country to obedience by force; and to express their hopes that his Majesty's desire to restore the public tranquillity might be forwarded, and made effectual, by a happy reconciliation with the revolted colonies.' (*Ann. Reg.* 1782, p. 168.)

has but one man more in his army than is on the opposite shore.

These points premised, I have a very imperfect guess at what will ensue. I expect no real good, much confusion, no doubt. Sandwich, perhaps, will decamp. I should not wonder if Lord North should for the first time think seriously of retiring. Rigby and the Lord Advocate, I am sure, think of staying, for they last night declared themselves *converted*, undoubtedly if the minority is likely to be converted into a majority; besides the Lord Advocate, who is stickling to be Treasurer of the Chambers for life, if he should quit his profession to be Treasurer of the Navy too, had not completed his bargain. When scales are very even, a grain will turn them; a dram of reason will produce conviction, when a pound of arguments had had no weight.

If I wrote for an hour, I could furnish you with nothing more than conjectures, which would be very vague. You had better come yourself and look at the hurricane, which will not end in a moment; yet it may. I have no opinion of the conduct of the generals who have gained ground; nay, though they have learned to fight, they know not how to improve their advantages, and if they should, they will quarrel about the spoil. However, I am clear that it is the present calamitous situation, though it seemed to have made so little impression, that produced the present crisis, aided, indeed, by the treachery of some of the court, and by the wretched tools it employed. Therefore, though the opposition should lose the moment, or the court have address to divide them, the moment will return again, not of *restoring* the constitution (pray have patience, and don't think again of improving it, which would only confound us more), but of opportunities of checking more mischief. That is the most I expect, but it is impossible to crowd into a letter such an inundation of ideas as present themselves. I see

comfort in some light—solid hopes in none. I do see new mischiefs at hand that have not yet disclosed themselves, and which I doubt will destroy us at home without the necessary consequences from all we have lost, and from the situation of our moneyed affairs; but this is a topic I shall not broach on paper. Adieu! I have not time to add a word.

It is no new Fast candidate that is to have the vacant mitre, but that poor creature Dr. *Bagot*, and the Fast sycophant Bishop *Butler* is to have the deanery of St. Paul's. Perhaps you thought these cures of souls would have been given to the Mohocks, Arnold and Tarleton, who are bloody enough to wear lawn sleeves. I must tell you a saying of Sheridan too sublime to be called a *bon mot*. Tarleton boasts of having butchered more men, and lain with more women than anybody—'*Lain with*,' said Sheridan, 'what a weak expression;—he should have said, *ravished*—rapes are the relaxation of murder.'

2275. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Feb. 23, 1782.

I never remonstrate, Madam, against the behests of Dame Prudence, though a lady I never got acquainted with till near my grand climacteric. I approve of your giving no handle to suspicions; but, is it necessary to banish yourself? Must you be able to prove an alibi? And may not your staying in the country be surmised as calculated for seeing your son more secretly? It avails nothing to cure a jealous mind of one object of distrust—you do not cure it of jealousy. I shall certainly not open my lips on one of your Ladyship's motives and measures; but as to your fixing a time for coming, and though Lord Ossory says it will be next week, I have little faith; nor shall expect you before the Greek

Calends, a certain time of a month in which the Athenian ladies, who never kept their words, used to come to town.

This was all I had to say, for our Lord will write to you himself, no doubt, from the field of battle. Perhaps I ought to congratulate you on his being almost victorious; at least, it was a drawn battle, when the enemy had a majority but of one. I confess I expected the opposition would have lost ground, as I thought Lord Sandwich more unpopular than the war, and that the deserters, as usual of late, would make their peace by returning to their colours; but it seems I little understand how interest operates on men. It appears that it acts again as it used to do formerly, and conducts its mercenaries to the increasing side: still it is my opinion, though I do not boast of my penetration, that the present face of affairs will produce nothing but new confusion. Though the court should take panic, or be actually beaten, it will recover its ground. The opposition will not agree, and one little faction or other will grow, or pretend to grow, more enraged at its competitors, than at the enemy, and will accept the places against their late friends, which they cannot obtain by the acquiescence of those friends.

This, I imagine, will be the case, if it comes to a treaty; but should an alteration and a new administration take place, what can they do, ruined as the country is?—No; I shall tremble for them, not rejoice; especially as their old antagonists turned into an opposition, will be very different opponents, and not conscientious and moderate as they have been. I foresee much more that I will not express; nor will I say more, when it would only be conjecturing. I have no opinion of my own sagacity; and what signifies my guessing what is to happen, when I shall probably see so little of the crowd of events that are coming on? I shall leave my country afloat, struggling for existence, and then in quest of a new constitution, for I do not see a shadow of

probability of the old being restored. To that my attachment was, and I care little indeed about any other that will not resemble it. Perhaps this is not the language of a man rejoicing in the success of his friends; but *places* for them was never what I was solicitous about. On one point I do heartily rejoice—the pursuit of the American war must stop; ay, and for a while at least, despotism must pause; and though it may be England's fate at last, it will not be America's.

I beg your Ladyship's pardon for talking so much politics—no, I do not; I could talk to no man more capable of understanding them; and it would be impertinent to treat *you* with trifles at such a moment, which made me write, though Lord Ossory is in town; but I have not anticipated what he will tell you. He is too young not to regard triumph as a good: it is the property of sedentary age to balance the different aspects of prospect.

2276. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 25, 1782.

There are certain moments in politics which excite eager curiosity, but in which it is least easy to satisfy it. This means a crisis, in which the scales are so nicely balanced as to fluctuate, and consequently to puzzle the prophetic eye even of calculators. On Wednesday last, Mr. Fox renewed the attack on Lord Sandwich, who was saved by a majority but of nineteen. On the next day but one, General Conway moved to address the King to take steps for peace with America. I believe the calculating prophets had been at work with their arithmetic, and had found that when a plurality of twenty-two was sunk to nineteen, it was a decreasing fund; and thence they contributed to make it so—for at two in the morning the majority appeared

to be fallen to a single figure. The question was rejected but by *one* voice.

As I do not make use of any table of interest, I shall not pretend to prophesy what will happen. Formerly, a sinking minister was soon gone; but as circumstances cannot always be the same, no more can times, which take their colour from them. One opinion I have more fixed, which is, that the longer the administration can maintain itself, the heavier will be its fall; for, as this success of the opposition is less owing to their abilities than to the calamities of the war, I see no prospect of victories to mend the situation of the ministers; and therefore, though they may divert their present danger, the temper of the nation, that is much soured, will not sweeten in their favour.

This is a brief sketch of the present aspect. I could not by a million of words tell you more yet. You will understand as much as is necessary, and I do not at all desire to be more intelligible to postmasters.

I have received two letters from you since my last; one, the moment that was set out. Yours came by Mr. Grenville[1] with the prints of the Medici, for which I give you many thanks. In your second, you say the Emperor had consented to receive the Pope, from whom he has taken at least a third of his tiara. We had heard that Cæsar added that his Holiness's visit would be to no manner of purpose. Perhaps the monarch would not dislike to return the *super aspidem et basiliscum calcabis,*—yet he may find an aspic under his feet. There is more than metaphoric poison still left in the vipers of the Church.

Accustomed as you are to our newspapers, you will read in them with astonishment the detail of a late trial for

LETTER 2276. — [1] Thomas (1755–1846), second son of Hon. George Grenville. He held various diplomatic appointments. He is well known as the collector of a fine library, which he bequeathed to the British Museum.

adultery between Sir Richard Worseley and his wife, sister of the Countess of Harrington. To save her last favourite, she summoned thirty-four young men of the first quality to depose to having received her favours; and one of them, a Duke's son, to having bestowed an additional one on her. The number was reduced to twenty-seven, and but few of them were examined; and they blushed for her. A better defence for her was the connivance of the husband, who was proved to have carried one of the troop on his back to the house-top, to view his fair spouse stark naked in the bath. The jury was so equitable as to give the plaintiff but one shilling damages[2].

This trial happened on the very Friday of the drawn battle in the House of Commons. Sir Richard Worseley was missing; Lord North, inquiring for him, was told the cause of his absence. 'Oh,' replied the minister pleasantly, 'if all my cuckolds desert, I shall be beaten indeed.'

Tuesday night, late.

At my niece, Lady Cadogan's, this evening, I met Mr. Langley, Lord Stormont's secretary; who gave me great pleasure, by telling me that you are made Minister Plenipotentiary. I am glad you are a little richer, when you must be at extraordinary expense; but I am much more delighted that your own merits and zeal have obtained this recompense, and that they are rewarded so speedily. It does honour to the government too; yet I doubt you will not have the fuller satisfaction of seeing your labours terminated by the success you wish. I feel for those brave unrescued men[3]!

Poor Mr. Morrice is not come to town, nor can come,

[2] The trial took place in the court of King's Bench on the 22nd of February, before Lord Chief Justice Mansfield. *Walpole.*

[3] Besieged in Fort St. Philip at Minorca. *Walpole.*

though he has had an urgent call. Old Lady Brown[4], who was formerly at Venice, is dead, and has left him for his life an estate of 1,500*l.* a year. I told you how little prospect Cav. Mozzi has of obtaining assistance from him. It is plain this delay is welcome to my Lord; for I have not heard a syllable from his lawyers. I was, indeed, surprised the other day by a letter from his Lordship. It was to desire the favour of me to go and see a large picture that Cipriani has painted for him for the salon at Houghton—a most engaging sight to me, to be sure! Though such a request provoked me, I really believe it was madness and folly dictated it, rather than insult; though the latter is not impossible. I would not trust a pen in my own hand, lest it should be warm; and so have made no manner of answer. He has now bespoken another piece, frantic enough; for the subject is both indecent and shocking. Perhaps you have forgotten the story: it is that of Theodore and Honoria, from Dryden's Fables, where the naked ghost of a scornful mistress is pursued by demons and worried by blood-hounds. The subject, were it endurable, could only be executed by Salvator or Spagnolet. Imagine it attempted by modern artists, who are too feeble to paint anything but fan-mounts!

I believe I never told you, that, since his Lordship sold his collection of pictures, he has taken to design himself, and his scratches are pinned up about the stripped apartments. But I am foolish to repeat instances of his deliriums; though, indeed, the nation is so lunatic, that my nephew is no phenomenon. I saw *your* nephew last night at Gloucester House, and wonder he did not mention your new appointments; but, indeed, it was but for a moment: nor, in truth, though he is very obliging to me, and though I often

[4] Margaret Cecil, widow of Sir Robert Brown, formerly a merchant at Venice. *Walpole.*

see him at our little court, have I had any conversation with him for a long time. The play there begins late, for everything begins late, everybody arrives late everywhere, and I retire early; for I avoid all public places, and go to no other. A court life was never my object, nor would have been my choice for this end of my course, any more than it was for the commencement, though fate has connected both periods with such an attachment; yet trust I have acquired as little of the *esprit des cours* as if I had never been within one. How strange are the accidents of life! At ten years old I had set my heart on seeing George I, and, being a favourite child, my mother asked leave for me to be presented to him; which to the First Minister's wife was granted, and I was carried by the late Lady Chesterfield to kiss his hand as he went to supper in the Duchess of Kendal's apartment. This was the night but one before he left England the last time; and now, fifty years afterwards, one of his great-grandsons and one of his great-granddaughters are my great-nephew and niece[5]! Yet how little had the first part to do with bringing about the second! When one considers these events abstractedly, as I do, the reflection is amusing; it makes the politician's arts trifling and ridiculous: no plan, no foresight, no industry could have ranged or accomplished what mere chance has effected. It would not be less entertaining, if a politician would talk as frankly on the projects he had planned and been disappointed of effecting; but a politician would not look on the *dénouement* with the same indifference.

[5] Prince William Frederick and Princess Sophia of Gloucester, actually great-great-grandchildren of George I.

2277. To the Rev. William Mason.

Feb. 28, 1782.

Not only the American war is checked, but despotism itself is at bay. Out of that sink, the House of Commons, seeds of virtue have sprung up. The administration was defeated at one this morning by a minor- grown a major- ity of nineteen. Conway was general, and exerted the spirit of a young cadet; every mouth (that is able to open itself to-day) sounds his praises. Those mouths who have so long said nothing but *yes*, you may be sure have not recovered their dismay enough to say *no*. Whether Lord North may not by his fall, and by touching his mother dirt, recover, I do not pretend to say; I rather hope he will, for I would have those who have made the war make the peace, and then their measure will be full. The ministers received a less defeat yesterday, too, at the India House, where their saltpetre contract was set aside. The profits of Thompson[1] the contractor were to be but twenty-six out of forty-nine. This and the hoisting Atkinson, a more overgrown contractor still, to be one of the five preferred to the loan over all the bankers of London, is another flower in that wreath which binds Lord North's brows, though with no detriment to its predominant poppies. Two such contracts, and two armies taken in a net, are the ovations and triumphs of this egregious minister.

Bishop Butler (and I rejoice, therefore) is *débouté* of the Deanery of St. Paul's; it was promised to him. The Chancellor went to Lord North and asked it; he replied, 'Sorry, but it was promised.' 'God damn your promise! then I will get it somewhere else,' and got it[2].

Letter 2277.—[1] John Townson, M.P. for Milborne Port, and a Director of the East India Company.

[2] Thurlow's brother, at this time Bishop of Lincoln, became Dean of St. Paul's on March 13, 1782.

I yesterday received yours of the 24th; we shall have time to consider about the odes, for as yet I have heard nothing of the D. of Devon's imprimatur, and as his brother Lord George Henry was married last night to the great heiress of Northampton[3], there will be no making application again yet. Nay, I have not yet received what Lady Harcourt will contribute, nor could I have leisure at present to attend to the press, having a thousand avocations, though no real business—not political, for I only sit at home and hear what passes, and shall neither go to my neighbour's[4] levee, nor to that in Grosvenor Square[5], should either be so happy in his own estimation as to attain a *real* one. The Marquis has long had a plaything one. Alas! I too have a plaything court that takes up some of my time. However, I shall always be so insignificant myself, as to be ready for my own amusements whenever I have leisure for them. Connections make themselves whether one will or not, but nobody can make one be a minister against one's will, unless one is of as little consequence as Ellis.

I do not even reply to your secret, so much I respect one, but I am sorry you will fall on my poor friend Sir John[6], who is a most inoffensive and good being. Do not wound harmless simpletons, you who can gibbet convicts of magnitude.

As you do not like George Selwyn's last *bon mot*, and dethrone it for one of your own, which I confess is a good one, I shall presume to send you one of mine, though I sin against my own modesty, and abhor self-applause even in the humble guise of a saying. Last week at Princess Amelie's (another of my courts in miniature), Lady Margaret

[3] Lady Betty Compton.

[4] The Earl of Shelburne, whose town house was Shelburne (afterwards Lansdowne) House in Berkeley Square.

[5] The Marquis of Rockingham's town house was 4 Grosvenor Square.

[6] Sir John Hawkins, author of a *History of Music*. Mason had written an Essay on Church Music in which he had expressed views differing from Hawkins'.

Compton said she was as poor as Job. 'I wonder,' said Lady Barrymore, 'why people only say *as poor as Job*, and never as rich, for in one part of his life he had great riches.' 'Yes,' said I, 'Madam, but then they pronounce his name differently, and call him *Jobb*.'

As I calculate that you will be at Aston in two days, I shall direct this thither, and hope it will stay for you. I have not time for a word more.

2278. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, March 1, 1782.

You know I deem myself a bad political prophet. I certainly did not expect that the opposition (no longer the minority) would have such rapid success as to have gained a complete victory already. I wrote to you on Tuesday, that on the Friday preceding they had been beaten but by *one*. On Wednesday last, General Conway renewed his motion for an address of pacification with America, and carried the question by a majority of nineteen. His speech was full of wit, spirit, and severity; and after the debate Mr. Fox complimented him publicly on this second triumph, he having been also the mover of the repeal of the Stamp Act. In short, he stands in the highest light, and all this fame is unsullied by the slightest suspicion of interested or factious motives in his conduct.

It would be idle in me, who profess want of penetration or intuition into futurity, to tell you what I think will happen; in truth, I could not tell you, if I would, what I foresee. The public, certainly, expects some sudden change. I neither do, nor wish it. At present I think alteration would only produce confusion, without any advantage. My reasons it would be useless to detail, for they will have no share in the decision.

I would write these few words, lest your nephew should not; though in reality I have told you nothing. You will just be prepared not to be surprised, whatever shall arrive, as it is a moment which may produce anything. I mean, a change, a partial settlement, a total one, or a re-settlement of the present system; though I should think *that*, or a partial change, the least likely to last. Any one of them will be fortunate if productive of peace; and, at least, nothing that has happened removes that prospect to a greater distance. If I live to see that moment, I shall be happier than I have for some time expected to be. I dare not entertain greater views for my country, for a long season; though nations, like individuals, are not precluded from experiencing any change of fortune.

P.S. When you do not hear from me at such a crisis, be sure that nothing material has happened. We have both seen interministeriums of six weeks.

2279. To John Henderson.

Berkeley Square, March 4, 1782.

I am afraid, dear Sir, that I am not robust enough to bustle through the great crowd that I hope you will have at your benefit; but as I am not deaf, as well as lame, it is very hard that I am not to hear you repeat your *own* verses, which I had rather hear than those of others, though you do more justice to the latter; for your modesty was so great, that if your own had not been excellent, I should not have discovered their merit by your repetition of them. I will certainly search for the book you want, if I have it, the first moment I can go to Strawberry Hill, which I doubt will not be for a week or ten days. I shall be extremely glad to contribute a mite to a poem I like so much; and

when we are better acquainted, as I hope we shall be, you will know that I am no flatterer; nor would I do so base an act as to commend verses highly that I thought indifferent. It would be flattery if, never having seen you on the stage but twice, I should tell you that you excel Mr. Garrick. It is very sincere when I protest that I admired your verses extremely, and that I thought him a very indifferent poet, or rather no poet at all. I shall be very impatient to be confirmed in this preference. In the meantime give me leave to thank you for *The School for Scandal*, for your ticket, and for the real obligation I have to you for saving my scenes from the *Biographia Dramatica*; but pray do not imagine that I think I have paid all my debts by the enclosed little note.

Your grateful humble servant,

Hor. Walpole.

2280. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

I was very ill, Madam, after I left your Ladyship, and I am well again, without having done anything to occasion either. I only mention this to show you that my disorders are of no consequence, nor worth minding; and therefore, good as you are, I do beg of you to take no notice of them, for it makes me appear very ridiculous to myself, as I can give no account of what is the matter with me. It will indeed oblige me seriously if you will never say anything about it, for if it is fancy I do not desire to be indulged in it.

I wish your Ladyship joy on last night's victory[1];

Letter 2280. — Hitherto printed as part of the letter to Lady Ossory of Nov. 13, 1777. (See *Notes and Queries*, Sept. 15, 1900.)

[1] On March 4 a resolution proposed by Conway condemning the prosecution of the American war was allowed by the government to pass without a division.

General Conway has just been here in great spirits and told me of it.

2281. To George Hardinge.

March 8, 1782.

It is very pleasing to receive congratulation from a friend on a friend's success: that success, however, is not so agreeable as the universal esteem allowed to Mr. Conway's character, which not only accompanies his triumph, but I believe contributed to it. To-day, I suppose, all but his character will be reversed; for there must have been a miraculous change if the Philistines do not bear as ample a testimony to their Dagon's honour, as conviction does to that of a virtuous man. In truth, I am far from desiring that the opposition should prevail yet: the nation is not sufficiently changed, nor awakened enough, and it is sure of having its feelings repeatedly attacked by more woes; the blow will have more effect a little time hence: the clamour must be loud enough to drown the huzzas of five hoarse bodies, the Scotch, Tories, clergy, law, and army; who would soon croak if new ministers cannot do what the old have made impossible; and therefore, till general distress involves all in complaint, and lays the cause undeniably at the right doors, victory will be but momentary, and the conquerors would soon be rendered more unpopular than the vanquished; for, depend upon it, the present ministers would not be as decent and as harmless an opposition as the present. Their criminality must be legally proved and stigmatized, or the pageant itself would soon be restored to essence. Base money will pass till cried down. I wish you may keep your promise of calling upon me better than you have done. Remember, that though *you* have time enough before you, I have not; and, consequently, must be

much more impatient for our meeting than you are, as I am, dear Sir,

Yours most sincerely,
H. Walpole.

2282. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, March 9, 1782.

Though I have scarce time, I must write a line to thank you for the print of Mr. Cowper, and to tell you how ashamed I am that you should have so much attention to me, on the slightest wish that I express, when I fear my gratitude is not half so active, though it ought to exceed obligations.

Dr. Farmer has been with me, and though it was but a short visit, he pleased me so much by his easy simplicity and good sense, that I wish for more acquaintance with him.

I do not know whether the Emperor will atone to you for demolishing the cross, by attacking the crescent. The papers say he has declared war with the Turks. He seems to me to be a mountebank who professes curing all diseases. As power is his only panacea, the remedy methinks is worse than the disease. Whether Christianity will be laid aside, I cannot say. As nothing of the spirit is left, the forms, I think, signify very little. Surely it is not an age of morality and principles; does it import whether profligacy is baptized or not? I look to motives, not to professions. I do not approve of convents; but, if Cæsar wants to make soldiers of monks, I detest his reformation, and think that men had better not procreate than commit murder—nay, I believe that monks get more children than soldiers do—but what avail abstracted speculations? Human passions wear the dresses of the times, and carry on the same views, but in different habits. Ambition and interest set up

religions or pull them down, as fashion presents a handle; and the conscientious must be content, when the mode favours their wishes, or sigh when it does not.

Yours most sincerely,

H. W.

2283. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, March 11, 1782.

Though I begin this letter to-night, I do not know when it will set out; perhaps not before to-morrow sevennight. I do not even know whether I shall not contradict at the end anything I may tell you at the beginning; for the parties in the House of Commons are so equally balanced, that victory vibrates from the one side to the other every day. Opposition stock fell ten below par last Friday, on questions that tended to remove the ministers. As three of the four motions were undeniable, the ministers got rid of them by the previous question, and consequently prevented the fourth, which would have brought home the others to their doors. They carried that question by 226 to 216. The report of another victory, more national, favoured them, though many suspect that it was coined on purpose. Admiral Hood was said to have defeated the French fleet, rescued St. Christopher's, and taken the six hundred men that had landed[1]. This would be most fortunate; but it was not confirmed when I left town this morning. In short, I came hither for two days to breathe, and rest my ears from politics, which at such a crisis you may be sure assail them from morning to night: not that I open them voluntarily, you may judge, when I fly hither, though there is to be important matter in the House again to-day, not a syllable of which I shall hear before Wednesday. Lord North is to open his taxes, which probably just now

Letter 2283.—[1] This was not the case.

will not be admitted as submissively as of late years: though I suppose they will produce more clamour in a little time than at their birth, when every one who will be affected by them shall begin to apply the grievance to himself, especially as opposition will naturally paint them in their worst colours. As I shall not go to town to-morrow—one of the two foreign post-days—I could not send this away, were it farther advanced; and on Friday, the other post-day, I shall not know the event time enough to write. The opposition intend to give battle again on that day, but I do not know what is to be their *cri de guerre*; however, the field will be fought till it will be too late for the post. I am less anxious, as your nephew tells me he writes to you constantly.

The ministers are certainly run hard; and if they do not make peace with America, or have some great victory, though I do not guess where that is likely to arrive, they will have difficulty to stand their ground. New losses will make their fall more probable, and more dangerous. Minorca, we know, is gone; and we know what other places may follow. The foreign papers will ring with the enormous sum it has cost us to lose America, &c. I saw a letter from abroad last week, which said that they are amazed that so many miscarriages had not overturned the administration. They may wonder; but, believe me, deprivation would be a feather-bed to what they hear every day—I mean the ministers. It is a worse service than that of a general. He stands on a rising ground out of cannon-shot, gives his orders, sees his soldiers fall or conquer, and at most is quit for the disgrace, if he loses the day. In Parliament, all the artillery is pointed at the leaders, who are galled during the combat, and must fight the battle themselves. The troops sit by, are paid beforehand, receive not a knock, and retire to their tents the moment they have said Yes or No! I wish generals were in the same predica-

ment, and suffered all the wounds. Well! I shall reserve the rest of my paper: I may have matter to fill it.

Saturday, 16th.

The tax-day passed very quietly; however, it was reported and generally believed that Lord North would resign. Nay, it is known that the Chancellor has been negotiating with Lord Rockingham. Whether too little was offered, or too much demanded, a resolution was taken to try one more engagement. The opposition were very confident of victory, and not without cause; for, when a flag of truce was hung out, the mercenary troop of calculators was likely to desert to the side that was most likely to possess the military chest. It is probable that that chest was previously abandoned, to retain them; for the court, at one this morning, had a majority of nine, though the minority were stronger by ten votes than in the former battle.

I should be very presumptuous were I to attempt to guess what will happen, when brokers themselves find it so difficult to decide which side has the best of the lay. Future historians may dignify the contest with the distinctions of loyalty and patriotism, and I have no doubt but both are engaged; yet I humbly conceive, that, if Potosi lay in the quarters of either army, that corps would gain the victory—perhaps I have given my opinion to a degree; though the vein of ore is not very redundant.

Monday, 18th.

Two days and a half (a great while in curiosity's almanac) are passed, and no news of a resumption of negotiation. The Marquis's terms were deemed to trespass on some precious fleurons in the crown, which, though perhaps new acquisitions, have a finer water than some of the old table diamonds. The camps will therefore probably remain in the field some time longer, though not without skirmishes.

At the same time, I do not see that any favourable events are likely to happen on the defensive side. The recovery of St. Christopher's is still in suspense, nor does Hood's advantage seem at all to deserve the name of victory—but I always check myself when I can only conjecture; besides that, in a letter that is to cross the sea, I keep a gag in my pen; for I would not tell France a syllable more than she would know if I never wrote a letter.

Yours, that tells me of your preferment, I have received, and am rejoiced it was so well-timed; for Minorca is gone, and your zeal was handsomely accepted, though unsuccessful.

Tuesday, 19th.

I had intended to finish my letter to-day, but have been hindered by company, even till dinner-time, and am not dressed, and am engaged the moment I have dined. Indeed, I have nothing new to add; but, if anything happens before Friday, I will desire your nephew to write; for not having so much curiosity as the town, nor any wish to see any particular person in place, I shall go to Strawberry on Friday for two days, as air and tranquillity are more requisite to me than a collision of parties. Adieu!

2284. To John Henderson.

Dear Sir, Berkeley Square, March 14, 1782.

I was at Strawberry Hill yesterday, and hunted all over my library for *Palladis Tamia*[1], the book you wanted, but could not find it. I did not remember having it, nor is it in the catalogue of my books, though that is no certain rule, as I have bought a great many since the catalogue was made, and have neglected to enter them. However,

Letter 2284.—[1] By Francis Meres (1565–1647); it was first published in 1598, and contains various mentions of Shakespeare's works.

I do believe Mr. Malone is mistaken in thinking I bought a book, of which I have not the least idea, though I do not pretend my memory is so good as it was. I hope this non-possession will not make me forfeit a sight of your poem, by the specimens of which you did not seem to want assistance from an old author. Will you ask Mr. Malone what the size is of *Palladis Tamia*, and whether in verse or prose?

I hope I never looked into it, or that it is very bad, since I recollect nothing about it; and, if it is not good, you will have no loss. Still, if you will describe it to me, I will search again.

Yours most sincerely,
HOR. WALPOLE.

2285. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, March 14, 1782.

No, I cannot agree that General Conway's success will have no effect. I do not mean that it will occasion any change of *men*, which I think could do little good now, but it certainly will check the wild and obstinate prosecution of the American war; and before it can be resumed, the obstinate would not be able to prosecute it, as they will have neither men nor money to send, fleets to transport them, nor anywhither to send them. I do agree with you that what is gone cannot be improved, yet what is gone might be restored; I do not say that I think it likely it will, but I am surprised at hearing you quote *my father* against me. How will your committee approve your citing him, whom in their censorial condemnation of friend and foe they have confounded in a sentence with the worst enemies of this country? It does not suit one in whom all praise would seem partiality, to defend his injured character,

though his temperate use of power for twenty years, without one instance of extending it, will not prove his abuse of it, any more than his poverty would prove his wealth; yet allow even me to say, that he had one gift that would not have been disserviceable even to Mr. Wyvill himself—that of common sense. My father knew that to govern or serve mankind, it was necessary to understand them, and to lead—not to dictate to them.

When I see you, I can prove to you that there is more foundation for what I say, than I will specify now; but as I never presume to dispute with you, but because I know we mean the same end, and as I never differ with you but with regret and with deference, and with perfect friendship, I will dismiss a subject that is too late to recall, and which I would not mention, if I had not seen the mischiefs that have happened to the best cause in the world by the want of union and mutual condescension. Hereafter I will give you three memorable and fatal instances.

After dinner.

I had written the above this morning and went out. When I came home to dinner I found Mr. Stonhewer had left a message that he could send a letter to you if he had it by six o'clock. I can therefore write more plainly, though I have not time but for a few words.

If it is the general belief that the administration cannot stand, that belief will advance their fall. Yesterday it was universally said that Lord North would resign,—to-day that he will risk the battle to-morrow. I am glad of that if he is to go, for it will make the opposition less tractable. Many attempts at negotiation have been and are making. My wish would be that the ministers might be able to maintain their ground some time longer, for three reasons: opposition would be more united, new misfortunes would contribute to exasperate the country, and the country must

be more changed against the court than I doubt it is, before the fall will be heavy enough, before the chief person[1] is subdued enough, before any new set can do any good, and before they can maintain their posts six months. For if they can do no good, if the chief person, the House of Lords, half the country, all the Scotch, the army, the clergy, and the law are against them, will not seven enter into the House than are there already, not worse than the worse spirits present, but the present grown worse, if that is possible! This is the quintessence of my creed; I have not time to detail it.

I did not publish my letter on Chatterton, because I am sick of most things, and especially of being the subject of talk. I wish to be tranquil and forgotten, and to have leisure for my little space to come, to finish what I have to do. I shall be very sorry, therefore, if your new production hooks me into the question more; however, the tempest is growing so loud that my name will soon be blown away!

I do wish you would come to town. It is not to invite you to a share of the wreck, with which I shall concern myself no more than you, but it is my opinion that the nation itself will be a wreck. If not as a patriot, have you no curiosity as a philosopher to survey a huge dismal scene? How can you content yourself with information from scraps of letters and blundered and misrepresented relations in newspapers?

Soame Jenyns has published some new metaphysical disquisitions. I have not gotten through half, though a small volume, yet I am persuaded, as I was of his last, that it is *ironie*, though, as he belongs to Lord Hardwicke and the court, I do not doubt but the University of Oxford will think him as orthodox as foolish Bishop Bagot. You shall judge by one position: he says that no man can

LETTER 2285.—[1] The King.

believe a future state on the authority of the New Testament without believing a pre-existent state on the same authority. One of his arguments is, that our sufferings here would be unjust if not punishments for previous deeds. Is this orthodox doctrine? He seems to me to act like the present ministers, who have more than once adopted a question of the opposition, and loaded it with absurdities in order to throw it out. Can we believe then an omnipotent and all-wise Being inflicted punishments, and at the same time took away from the sufferers all knowledge, all consciousness of the crimes they had committed?

The hour presses, and I must finish, though I have a thousand things more to say; but if ever persuasion were to attend my words, I should wish it were now, when I would tempt you to town. There is a gleam of some good amidst clouds of evils hanging over us—would you be out of the way of contributing a finger towards dispelling them? At least, come and see how the moment is lost or cast away.

I rejoice on Mr. Burgh's intended Commentary on your *Garden*: such things will survive whatever perishes, and may last till this island is ranked among the nations again. I have written in such a hurry, I don't know whether you can read me.

2286. To George Hardinge.

Berkeley Square, March 15, 1782.

You need never say more than one word, dear Sir, when you wish me to do anything that is in my power to serve you. At present I believe you have largely outstripped that occasion. Lord North certainly totters; but, if the

Letter 2286.—Not in C.; reprinted from Nichols's *Illustrations of Literary History*, vol. iii. pp. 210–11.

court has even a very slender majority to-night, for which they have been moving hell and earth, I am persuaded they will struggle on a little longer; should the reverse happen, I am far from thinking that a new arrangement will be easily or speedily made. In any case, I should doubt whether either side would risk dissolving the Parliament at this juncture, of which I have not heard one sober man talk. But to come nearer to your point: should a new Parliament be called, General Conway would be the most useless person to whom to recommend you. He has not the smallest inclination for coming into place; he is totally unconnected with any set of men, and even when he was Secretary of State, he would on no account be concerned in any election jobs. He has constantly declared that he is in opposition only upon the question of America; and it is my opinion that, whatever change arrives, you will see him nowhere but where he is.

I will make you no compliments on what I think of your qualifications for Parliament, because I do not see how or where I could prove that I am sincere. *I* certainly shall have no interest with any administration, as I can answer for myself that I never will be obliged to any minister; and he who will not serve ministers, has no right to ask favours of them. As you will find that I have spoken truth about myself, I am sure you will excuse my being so sincere on all the other points; but as it is my maxim, that he who speaks truth can never be detected, I had rather speak unwelcomely than give you hopes that it is utterly improbable I should ever be able to realize.

Yours most sincerely,

H. Walpole.

2287. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, March 15, 1782.

When I came home last night (after I had sent away my letter) I found your present of an old Cheshire cheese on my table, which I could not send for, as you had not told me the carrier's name. Though I never sup, I could not help eating a whole luncheon of it, and, without compliment, never tasted better. I was diverted too with the pains you had taken to pack it up, which I should have thought an effort beyond your patience; but there is nothing you cannot do from gardening to preserving the mould of an old cheese. As I am not a glutton by nature, I cannot enjoy it alone; and yet I doubt there is so much of it rotten that few but epicures will relish it. However, the parts that are sound are exquisite, and must be delicious to all who love cheese. They who do not would be choked with it, it is so strong—yet that is certainly a merit, and will make it keep the longer, and shows with what good cream it was made. I beg your pardon for saying so much on a cheese, but gratitude does not weigh the materials of a present but the intention, and when a gift is perfectly to my taste, as this is, I am more thankful than for a piece of plate whose value consists in its heaviness, and not in the fashion.

I must now jump from the dairy to literature. Soame Jenyns's book is a *chef-d'œuvre* of impudent profligacy—at least the seventh chapter on government and civil liberty is so. It contains a direct attack on liberty, and tells the people that they have a right in turbulent and factious times to call for arbitrary power. This is more direct than even Macpherson, Johnson, or Sir John Dalrymple have gone. The clergy will forgive his undermining

the New Testament, if he can give them despotism in its place. I wish you would persuade Mr. Burgh to answer this galley-slave: nobody is more capable, no, nor of confuting his whole book, which is a very small one. It would be useful too to unravel his irony, which is mighty creditable to his patron Lord Hardwicke, that housekeeper to the Church, and of whom one thinks with horror when one recollects, that after driving his brother to despair for accepting the seals, he and his other brothers are the most servile advocates for a court which the Earl treated Charles with such bitterness for consenting to serve.

2288. To Earl Harcourt.

My best Lord, March 17, 1782.

I am such a courtier and trimmer that I beg you to intercede with Lady Harcourt to excuse me from waiting on her this evening; you will suspect it is, that I may meet the Prince of Wales at Lady Hertford's. *That* would be like me, but for once it is a contrary reason. In short, I do not mean to go to Lady Hertford's, and, as I promised I would, she might take it ill if I should be at Lady Harcourt's and not go to her afterwards. Four days in a week royally thrown away, content my appetite for courts, and I will embark no farther till the Chancellor is sent to fetch me[1]. *Then* all my ambition may break out, and I may cease to be Lady Harcourt's and your Lordship's most devoted,

Hor. Walpole.

Letter 2288. — [1] Lord Thurlow was sent to the Marquis of Rockingham to find out whether he was inclined to take office as Prime Minister.

2289. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, March 21, 1782.

I told you on Tuesday that I would not write by this post, and was to go out of town to-morrow. You will excuse my breaking a promise that you did not desire me to keep, especially when I have so big a revolution to tell you. Out of town I cannot go, for it has snowed all the evening, nor am I so perfectly incurious as not to like to hear the rumours of the hour; for as to settlement, I believe I might be absent two days and not find it come to a consistence—but I recollect that you do not know what has happened, and may have a little curiosity too.

Well! yesterday, as a repetition of the late motion, somewhat varied, was on the point of being made in the House of Commons, Lord North rose, and declared the whole administration was dissolved.

You are not to imagine that this declaration was made in consequence of any negotiation, treaty, compromise, or management. Oh, no! all treaty had been broken off; and that puissant administration, that had swept away everything before it—at home, have laid down their arms without being beaten, and without any conditions. Such a surrender, not imagined even in idea at Christmas, is very novel. Not a month is passed since General Conway's successful motion; not that he is entitled to all the glory. Lord Cornwallis's defeat had certainly opened many eyes, which had been obstinately shut to all our other defeats and losses; and an intriguing faction in the ministry, who did not foresee the discomfit they were bringing on themselves, had disjointed their combined powers, and given encouragement to the opposition. When some of the ministers had declared the recovery of America impossible,

others, who had been lulled asleep by that vision, found there was more truth in that revelation than they would believe from opponents. These steps made, Mr. Conway's motion easily found its way. This is a brief, but, I believe, a very true account of what has passed.

For what is to come, I am far from being able to give you as just a view. At four o'clock to-day not the smallest advance had been made towards a new establishment. On that head it is not proper to say more. I shall have eighteen or twenty hours before this goes away to tell you, if anything new finds its way to the public.

In your last you thanked me for the advice I gave your nephew, which he was so wise as to follow, and which proved to have been such good advice. It was not solely given for his own sake. I certainly had *you* in my eye too. But, though my own principles are very determined, no party views have ever, or will, induce me to give insidious counsel to a friend that asks my opinion, nor have I once allowed myself to seduce a son (and I look on your nephew as your son) to act contrary to the inclination and sentiments of his parent; I should think it most dishonourable. When your nephew, two years ago, brought over opinions that I thought would grieve you, I told him that, though they were conformable to my own, I could not encourage him in them; yet neither of these occasions did I even hint to you, when it might look like making court to the late ministers, nor certainly did I act thus *à leur intention.*

Well! I revert to my old wishes and prayers for peace! If that arises out of the present chaos, *benedicite!* England's tranquillity and welfare are all my objects. I care not who the ministers shall be, provided they do but keep those points in view. My dislike of our late measures was founded on no personal interests; nor, should my nearest friends be again employed, as they were in 1766, shall I be a jot more

a gainer than I was then. You was the only person then for whom I asked a single favour—one more than I should ask now. The colour of my life has been disinterested. It shall not be contaminated in its dregs.

22nd.

Nothing—nothing at all is settled. To-day's report is, that Lord Shelburne was yesterday two hours with the King. If Lord Shelburne undertakes, who will carry very little strength but ample unpopularity, I shall think him bolder than wise, and will venture for once to foretell, that he will only share in the defeat of his enemies, instead of partaking the victory of his allies. Thus I must leave you in incertitude; but it is no more than we are—if that is any compensation. Adieu!

2290. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, March 21, 1782.

You and I shall now, I think, agree on one great point, as I trust we do on most others: you will allow that the constitution is not quite gone when the House of Commons in two months overturns an administration that had taken such deep root. In one word, Lord North, at the head of the mercenaries, laid down his arms yesterday and surrendered at discretion, the opposition having refused to listen to any overtures till the constitutional preliminaries[1] that they demanded were granted.

Letter 2290. — [1] 'The public measures, for which the new minister was said to have stipulated with the court before he would consent to enter into any negotiation for office, were these:—1. Peace with the Americans, and the acknowledgement of their independence not to be a bar to the attainment of that object. —2. A substantial reform in the several branches of the civil list expenditure, on the plan proposed by Mr. Burke.—3. The diminution of the influence of the crown, under which article the bills for excluding contractors from seats in Parliament, and disqualifying the revenue officers from voting in the election of members, were included.' (*Ann. Reg.* 1782, p. 177.)

This is precisely all I know, not how the surrender was determined; perhaps from the timidity of the ministers who might see that obstinacy *in the last resort* would draw tenfold danger on their heads. In short, the royal yacht was expediting at Deptford! Still I should not wonder if no new arrangement yet took place, provided any of the last set could be hardy enough to rally.

Who are to be the new ministers? I neither know nor care—I mean from personal attachments. If the new mean and *attempt* well, I hope all the friends to their country will assist and support them, ay, and have patience, for everything cannot be effected at once; nor anything but a restoration of the state ministers if there is any division amongst the friends of their country. This is what every art will be used to procure: it has been the grand nostrum of the whole system and will be doubly exerted when they have lost the Treasury.

Time I have not to write more did I know more; nor shall I know more than the rest of the town; for no change shall ever make me connected with any administration, though I will reverence any that retrieves liberty. I have the comfort of seeing that America may be free if it will. It is the only country that ever had an opportunity of choosing its constitution at once: it may take the best one that ever was, ours, and correct its defects. I have been interrupted again, for everybody is running about the town to hear or tell, and this house is in the way of everybody. But I cannot conclude without thanking you again for your present, which is more to my taste than ever present was. It is high-flavoured to the most exquisite degree; in short, I cannot express a quarter of what I think. I do not know that you ever pleased me more.

Monday, 7 o'clock.

Thank God! thank God! what remains of this country

and constitution may be saved: no art or industry has been employed to divide and break the opposition. Lord Shelburne has resisted nobly and wisely, and they triumph together. The court has yielded completely—though not till this morning, when it had not above three hours left to hold out. Yesterday a struggle was made to add Lords Gower and Weymouth to the new Cabinet: even they are given up, and I should think by Lord Weymouth's usual poltroonery. The constitutional points are granted. The new Cabinet are to be Lord Thurlow, Chancellor (*tant pis*); Lord Camden, President; Lord Rockingham, First Lord of the Treasury; Admiral Keppel, of the Admiralty; General Conway, Commander-in-Chief; Lord Shelburne and Charles Fox, Secretaries of State, to whom are to be added the Duke of Richmond as Master of the Ordnance, and Lord John Cavendish, as Chancellor of the Exchequer; not a word has been said of the other places, nor do I care a straw who has them. The citadel in general is well garrisoned; and as they cannot hope for favour they must stand on national ground. I have not time to say a syllable more. I could tell you very curious passages but cannot write them. Pray be reconciled to the House of Commons—I am sure this is not the *Lords'* doing—though it is marvellous in our eyes. Adieu.

2291. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

March 21, 1782.

It was most obliging, Madam, to send me the news, though I happened to be gone to the Princess. I did not, indeed, expect to live to see the administration demolished. I hope I shall not be mistaken in thinking the moment not ripe for their fall. Their having laid down their arms, before a capitulation made, is a very favourable circumstance; and

if their successors are wise, may be turned to good account, if, instead of paying court for pardon, they take care to be above wanting it. If they imitate the last ministers, they will make way for them again, and will fall less pitied, and still less deserving pity.

2292. To the Rev. William Mason.

March 23, 1782.

Thus far our arms have with success been crowned,
And Rome in tears.

I was in the right; I told you division would be attempted, and so it has been, Lord Rockingham's constitutional demands not proving palatable. On Thursday evening Lord Shelburne was sent for to a house in the Park [1], and after a parley of three hours, declined; next morning Lord Gower was tried: ditto. At four o'clock to-day, and this is Saturday, no new step had been taken. If the white flag is not hung out this evening or to-morrow, I do not know what may not happen on Monday: nothing that will break your heart or mine. These vain struggles have hampered ten thousand times more: Lord Rockingham may dictate his own terms. The Erse nation is furious at Lord North: *Fingal* himself [2] told him, 'Remember, my Lord, I do not desert *you*.'

George Selwyn said an excellent thing t'other night. Somebody at White's missing Keene and Williams, Lord North's confidants, asked where they were? 'Setting up with the corpse, I suppose,' said Selwyn. This was quite in character for him, who has been joked with for loving to see executions and dead bodies.

Letter 2292. — [1] The Queen's House.

[2] The King. When Lord North went to take leave of him 'the King parted from him rudely without thanking him, adding, "Remember, my Lord, that it is you who desert me, not I you."' (*Last Journals*, vol. ii. p. 521.)

Mr. Warton's[3] answer to Milles and Bryant is come out. There is good in it, but he does not unfold his arguments sufficiently, and, I think, does not take off one or two of Bryant's strongest arguments. At the end he shows that the Dean has strangely disguised the material affair of blacking the parchments. This I take to be the detection Mr. Nichols announced. It is no wonder that Mr. Warton's answer appeared flat to me, it certainly is not the best answer that has appeared.

If your own curiosity will not lead you to town, it would be in vain for me to solicit you. Folks generally wish they could have lived in historic moments, instead of reading them. There is a double reason for being witness to them, when one can, which is, that they who can be spectators cannot be readers, for the story is not written till they are dead. It is true, most things are in newspapers now as soon as they happen, but so are ten thousand things that have not happened, and who can winnow them, but on the spot? I pity posterity, who will not be able to discern a thousandth part of the lies of Macpherson and Bate; but I do not pity you who might know better if you pleased. However, I will not scold you so much as you deserve, because I never can praise you a quarter so much as you deserve. Adieu!

P.S. *Vogue la galère! v.* my last.

2293. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, March 26, 1782.

It is natural for people to conclude, that, when a whole administration is dissolved, another should be appointed in

[3] A pamphlet called *An Enquiry into the Authenticity of the Poems attributed to Thomas Rowley, in which the Arguments of the Dean of Exeter and Mr. Bryant are examined.*

its room. You and I, who have lived longer than the greater part, have seen times when that has not been the case for weeks; but this interministerium has been much shorter. On Wednesday the sentence passed on the late ministers. On Thursday evening Lord Shelburne was sent for to the Queen's House. What passed has been kept secret; except that he acquainted Lord Rockingham by message that he had not violated their union. Friday and Saturday passed without the public learning any news of an arrangement. On Sunday morning Lord Shelburne notified to Lord Rockingham that all his Lordship's constitutional demands were granted, with *carte blanche* for the removal and substitution of persons, and that all that was required was the introduction of Lords Gower and Weymouth into the Cabinet. The Marquis was not pleased at Lord Shelburne's having the honour of being the negotiator, instead of transacting his own business himself; nor could digest a Cabinet in which, if Lord Shelburne should take a devious path, and in which he would command a voice or two more, the majority would not depend on the Prime Minister. The Marquis's friends saw that he was falling into a snare that might have been laid to divide the party; and prevailed, though with great difficulty, to waive the jealousy of the negotiator, but to resist the eccentric recommendation of the two other Lords. On that plan, Lord Rockingham, at six on Sunday evening, accepted the gracious offers, provided such a Cabinet (as he stated in a given list) should be accorded. This answer was transmitted to Lord Shelburne, and by him conveyed accordingly. The time pressed: the House of Commons was to meet on Monday, and were not in a mood to be dallied with. Prudence prevailed, and prevented—no matter now what; all was granted and ceded that Lord Rockingham asked. He accepted; and Mr. Dunning, Lord Shelburne's friend, moved *by authority*, that the House

should adjourn till Wednesday, declaring that an arrangement was ready to be made.

Here is the list of the Cabinet—Lord Thurlow to remain Chancellor; Lord Camden, President; Lord Rockingham, First Lord of the Treasury; General Conway, Commander-in-Chief; Admiral Keppel, First Lord of the Admiralty; Lord Shelburne and Charles Fox, Secretaries of State; the Duke of Grafton, Privy Seal; with the Duke of Richmond, Master of the Ordnance; and Lord John Cavendish, Chancellor of the Exchequer; to have seats in the Cabinet. This is all I know, and all I shall seek to know. I am totally indifferent about the arrangement of places, and hate details so much, that I am going out of town to avoid hearing discussions and reports.

Well! this revolution is so surprising, and by me so unexpected, that I can only say, with a change in a Scripture phrase, 'This is *not* the *Lord's* doing, but the *Commons'*, and it is marvellous in our eyes!' If it produces the two points I have at heart, the recovery of the constitution (which it appears by this spirit in the House of Commons was not quite gone) and peace, I shall be content, and will never think on politics more. What has a man to do with them who never felt a titillation of ambition? The spirit of liberty alone has made me at any time attend to them; for life without freedom has but a wider or a narrower prison. Honours make one a slave to etiquette, and power to solicitation. A private man who is uncontrolled is emperor of himself. I am going to my country palace, which is the best enjoyment that the greatest monarch knows.

Having dispatched a revolution, I must now trouble you on a private melancholy affair: General Conway has heard from Mrs. Damer that her aunt Lady William Campbell[1] is

LETTER 2293. — [1] Wife of Lord William Campbell, youngest brother of the Duke of Argyll and Lady Ailesbury. Lady William was an

much out of order. I immediately advised Mr. Conway to write, and recommend to Mrs. Damer to carry her aunt directly to Florence, where you could be of the greatest comfort and assistance to them, and could best contrive means of sending Lady William home by sea from Leghorn, in as safe a manner as may be at this moment. He has done so, and begs you will be so good as to give Mrs. Damer your advice in this and any other point; especially of a physician, if there is any Dr. Cocchi at Florence. He desires, too, that you will supply her with what money she wants, and draw upon him directly.

St. Kit's[2] has followed Minorca! It is sad: yet let us save the constitution, and I shall not die broken-hearted. If England is free, and America free, though disunited, the whole earth will not be in vassalage.

2294. To the Rev. William Mason.

March 26, 1782.

Most certainly I do not agree with you in thinking that the House of Commons turned out the late ministers solely because the latter had not money enough to purchase the former; this I cannot possibly agree to, because I know to the contrary. The House of Commons have that merit; it cannot be denied to them; and it is as true, that the House did this, though the majority had been bought, and though there was money enough, and enough was offered to buy them over again: but for this time they had virtue enough to reject it, and you are bound as a divine to accept those who have come in at eleven and three quarters o'clock.

In another point I was quite of your opinion: I wished

American, born in the province of Carolina; of which Lord William had been Governor. *Walpole.*

[2] The island of St. Christopher's surrendered to the French under the Marquis de Bouillé on Feb. 13, 1782.

the contest to last longer, but the victory has been so complete by the other side holding out to eleven and three quarters too, that three months longer could not have added to it. This was owing to Lord Rockingham's own single firmness. He first would not hear of a treaty, till his five national and constitutional points were granted, and at last rejected every reserve, and thus has triumphed without the shadow of a compromise of any sort. This is most religiously true: he deserves all praise and all support; and I do think you will believe me, who think very meanly of his abilities, and have not, nor ever shall have even distant or indirect connection with him, and who have cause to be displeased with him for *more* than personal rudeness to the Duchess of Gloucester; but princes and ministers are all alike to me; I will do justice to them indifferently, and prefer my country and its liberty to either and to both.

I do beseech *you*, who love both as well as I do, not to change your opinion, but to act with prudence and temper, and not gratify the public enemies with what they are labouring to effect, disunion among the friends of their country. If the new ministers disappoint our hopes by their own faults, they deserve no mercy, but let them be tried. They have everything to undo and to do, and remember, that virtue is their only instrument. Mr. Conway wisely and honestly warned them in public, that they must not fight even enemies with the weapon corruption. They must, therefore, be reasoned with, as they must reason with the nation. Good sense will have weight with a virtuous administration, if they are not a virtuous one—*Ora pro nobis.*

I am going to Strawberry to repose after this conflict, and to avoid the gossiping of the town on the disposition of plans about which I do not care a straw, nor know one beyond the Cabinet. There are various items of retrospect

that I should wish, but which I dare to say will be forgotten or thought obsolete in the multiplicity of greater objects, nor shall I have *voix en chapitre*. Mr. Conway and the Duke of Richmond are the only two with whom I have more than civil intercourse, and that I shall let dwindle with the others, now they are ministers. In short, I can now go to Strawberry without anxiety.

You ask for more, and more, and more. I could satisfy you, but not in a letter, nor would you believe me easily, though you do not want faith in the sort of things I should tell you. As to promotions and such *misères*, I have told you I do not trouble my head about them. In all probability I shall see much more of my neighbour at Bushy, Lord North, than of any minister. He is very good company. I cannot be suspected of paying court, which I never did in his power; and though I have a very bad opinion of him as a minister, he is so totally out of favour as well as out of place, that, methinks, that negative merit has its value.

Wednesday, 27th.

Perhaps everything I have been saying is useless: perhaps it may not signify a rush what our speculative opinions may be. Since I wrote yesterday the former part of this, I doubt whether the panic is not recovered so much, as to intend not to let the new settlement take place at all. I cannot explain further, and desire you to keep this to yourself, but I shall not be surprised if the laying down the arms without any condition was not a feint, an ambuscade of a very serious nature. However, the other side is neither blinded nor off their guard. They see, too, that they have nothing to expect but every possible insincerity and treachery even if allowed to proceed, which, I repeat, I doubt, though the principals are to kiss hands to-day; but we shall find that there is another House that will want correction much more than

that of the Commons. The present temper of the latter should be encouraged, not reviled nor split into different opinions, for its weight alone can bear down that of the other. If I do not speak sense and truth, you will scoff my ideas, and if I do not hereafter convince you that I have acted on your own principles, you will have reason to think me a rascal; I have dreaded something worse than I have hinted at, though some time ago I did absolutely tell you I had fears. When I see you I will unfold what I cannot give you a glimpse of now, and which will show you that I have acted very differently from what would be believed. Bring this letter with you, and I will unravel all; but nothing was ever less seated than the new administration is yet; you will, therefore, not be surprised if you hear it is dissolved.

Whatever happens, I shall be overjoyed if Mr. Burgh condescends to adopt my idea: yet I wish a less vanescent stigma than can be affixed by controversy were imprinted on the old servile buffoon's[1] front—but I must finish and go out.

2295. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, April 1, 1782.

You will be perfectly content with the new administration, if it can hobble on even for a short time; which, however, I must doubt. The Duke of Richmond is a man after your own heart, and after mine too, though I do not approve of his visions more than of yours, which seem to be the same. But when men have the same ends, I do not quarrel with the means: on the contrary, I am so desirous of union amongst the upright, that I am for acquiescence and temper, as the enemies are still both numerous and potent

Letter 2294. — [1] Perhaps Soame Jenyns, to whom Mason dedicated his poetical eclogue (published this year) *The Dean and the Squire.*

(potent because numerous), and labouring to sow division which they would enjoy and profit of. There is to be a committee of the House of Commons chosen to examine into its decays, and study a remedy, which when fixed on, the ministers will support. I may not be accurate in my definition, but this is the purport. If I gave loose to my own speculations, I should say that when a house is tumbling, it will not save it to new furnish one of the apartments, much less when there are people in two other chambers undermining the upholsters.

The Chancellor, it is said, declares against the constitutional bills; and will Lord Shelburne cordially promote them? In short, I see such seeds of mischief already sown, and the vanquished are so far from wearing an air of defeat, that I have not the smallest expectance of duration to the new system. The watchword Republicanism is given out against it, and grievous complaints made of the hardships, violences, and insults put on the crown. Lord Rockingham was not admitted even to an audience before the moment of his kissing hands, and much resistance, I am told, is made to a large creation of peers, who might a little balance the household troops in that garrison. The high priests and Scotch peers countenanced *against* the ministers will baffle any good that can be attempted. In the meantime, public distresses will pour in from all quarters, and if peace cannot be attained, I see no prospect of anything but ruin, which if the new ministers stay, will be imputed to them. But I believe the true authors will soon have an opportunity and the honour of completing their work, reinforced by part of the new administration, who will not return to opposition if accomplices in blowing up the new settlement; a plan that does not seem to be disguised.

This is enough to say on a transient interlude: it is better, however, than if they had been smiled into hopes of favour.

They see how ungracious they are. It is determined that they shall not be pleased with their situation; that they shall be clogged in every attempt to please the country, and, consequently, it is hoped that the country will not be pleased. Of all this they are aware, but they will be wiser than I if they can do what they are hindered from doing, and if they can do what will be expected from them, though they will not be enabled to do it. Thus the way is paved for the return of the old again, and I shall be much surprised if the present administration receive a quarter's salary; however, that point will be sooner cleared up. If they are permitted to do no good, the same influence can dispossess them again, therefore you will have better evidence than my conjectures. If the country cannot support them, the predominance of the crown is incontrovertible. It will be beggarly majesty, indeed, considering that almost everything else is gone; but a crown is precious in some eyes, though set with thorns and stripped of its diamonds.

Do not wonder if I write seldomer, for I shall now be much at Strawberry, where I have been three days. I shall know no more than you will see in the papers. I have no connection with anything called a minister more than I had two months ago, except the Duke of Richmond and Mr. Conway, and they have so much to do in their own department, that I shall see very little even of them.

Unpolitically we are alarmed about the caterpillars which threaten us with famine at least. The servants I could employ, and the boys I could hire, have been picking the nests in my grounds these three days. If there are any in your region, you must have the twigs cut off and burnt, with great care not to scatter, for fear of spreading them, and no time is to be lost as they are hatching.

Your favourite Lady Laura[1] is to be married to her cousin

LETTER 2295.—[1] Lady Laura Waldegrave married (May 5, 1782) George

Lord Chewton, an excellent young man, but very poor; still we are all much pleased.

I direct to York, for you said you should be there this week.

2296. To the Rev. William Mason.

April 2, 1782.

Though I wrote to you but last night, I must write again to tell you the extreme satisfaction you have given me by a letter I have just received, in which you say your county will act with temper. Never were temper and wisdom more necessary than at this moment, the only one we may ever have, and in which every devil is at work to divide us, and half Styx at work to calumniate our party and represent us as worse levellers than John of Leyden and his Anabaptists. I should regard the latter with contempt were there no danger of the other. I do, therefore, dread more being exacted and expected from the new ministers, than will depend on them to perform, clogged with Judases, thwartable by the House of Lords, and standing on no foundation but a *quicksand*. The Duke of Richmond is as firmly yours as you can wish—in truth, even more than you will like, for his exceeding scrupulousness and abstract notions will, I fear, counteract one *capital point* that I desire as much as you. I cannot explain myself here; you must bring me my letters for many solutions.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer[1] I have not seen since he has been so, nor knew he was going to York but by yours. I have neither attachment to, nor connection with any ministers, but my two friends[2], nor shall ever see any

Waldegrave, Viscount Chewton, who succeeded his father as fourth Earl Waldegrave in 1784, and died in 1789.

Letter 2296.—[1] Lord John Cavendish.

[2] General Conway (Commander-in-Chief) and the Duke of Richmond (Master-General of the Ordnance).

of the others. I write from my own opinions and principles, and can have no view but that of serving the cause at my heart; I never shall profit by any minister or ministry. I am ready to part with anything, and one day or other you will know my sincerity and disinterestedness, but I scorn ostentation, and am content to do the thing that is right.

I am highly diverted with your story of Johnson; but, like him, I must do justice: I admire him for not retracting his applause[3]. But he surprises me by suspecting Steevens. Nobody else guesses but one author; and when I wonder at their guess, and plead that person's extreme indolence, and how impossible that he should take such pains, they cry, 'But who else is capable of writing so well?' is it possible to answer *that* with truth? For the comment you honour me by requiring, I will with pride undertake it, if you accept of me, but I give you notice that I decay every day, inwardly as well as outwardly; nay, I have nothing left but my thumbs that are not lame, and I tremble lest I should soon be quite incapable of using my hands at all. You must send me, or bring me the other comment, for I kept no copy of it, nor remember a syllable of it, nor the style; and I should wish it to be as uniform as I can make it in my present debility, and without repetitions.

Who is Mr. Duncombe[4]? Consider how few persons I see, and how little I know beyond my own sphere. All my labours tend to preserve union, that if the present system blows up, as I apprehend it will, a respectable force may

[3] Mason had caused a copy of his recently published *Archæological Epistle to Dean Milles* to be sent to Dr. Johnson. The latter, according to Mason, 'read the poem before the preface, and thinking all that was said there was ironical, pronounced it to be superexcellent; on reading the preface afterwards he gravely said, "I find the author is no friend of mine, nevertheless I cannot gainsay his poetical talents."' (*Correspondence of Walpole and Mason*, vol. ii. p. 252.)

[4] Henry Duncombe, of Copgrove, Yorkshire, M.P. for York county.

remain together, or our victory has destroyed us. Charles Fox has acted a manly and most sensible part; and said the most necessary thing where it was most requisite; but this is one of the things to be explained hereafter. I wish you had not been so positive, but would have come to town. It is impossible to write all, and what cannot be written is the most essential.

I must add a curious history connected with our present politics, and only for your own ear, as I would by no means hurt the person concerned. When I attended the theatre about Mr. Jephson's play, Mr. Harris asked me, I thought accidentally, what I thought of Mr. Bentley's harlequinade, *The Wishes*. I commended it to the skies as it deserved. Shortly after I received a letter from the author, reciting what I had said to Mr. Harris, telling me it was to be revived, and desiring leave, with many compliments on my *excellent* taste and judgement, to send it to me for revisal. I replied *bonnement*, that I had said what I thought, and what I always had said, and with no idea of its being repeated to him; and I consented to receive the copy, at the same time telling him the faults I recollected, and which I intended to mark for correction. Judge of my astonishment when I found some admirable scenes totally omitted, many of the best traits of wit, that I have often repeated, cashiered, and the whole interlarded and converted into the most gross, most illiberal, and most vulgar libel on the opposition, and in particular on the City of London! It is true that, affecting impartiality, there were some strokes levelled at the ministers, but which they would well have forgiven, for the satire fell chiefly on their pusillanimity for not having hanged their chief opponents as traitors, rebels, spies and confederates of France. It is also true that amidst this Billingsgate there was humour that made me laugh. I instantly lapped up the packet, told the author

that he had totally spoiled his piece, and that I could not possibly have anything to do with a composition of that sort. Mr. Harris came to me again. I cut him short, and asked him how he could imagine I would be concerned in abuse on my friends. Well! the piece was announced, and the road strewed with garlands; but behold the administration was defeated!—the palm-branches gathered up, and the piece withdrawn. On Friday, as I went to Strawberry, I saw Mr. Harris at his own door at Knightsbridge: I stopped, and smiled, and said, 'So, Sir, *The Wishes* are withdrawn.' 'Lord, Sir,' said he, 'we should have had the house pulled down.'

I must so far justify Mr. Bentley, that I am persuaded there was more sincere zeal than interest in this outrageous invective. He always was (not by education certainly) a Tory by principle; even when he lived at Strawberry, we frequently had disputes then.

Do not mention this story, for his play may appear hereafter, and he wants the profits from it. Should there be tolerable times, he nor the manager will risk the ribaldry. If there are not, it will be thickened, and will suit the Augustan age in which it will appear, while the author, like those of *Hudibras* and of *Absalom and Achitophel*, will have prostituted their talents for a butt of sack and a wretched stipend ill paid. Adieu!

2297. To John Nichols.

April 1782.

As it is said to be so much desired, the author consents to let the whole of the letter on Chatterton be printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*[1]; but not in a separate pamphlet.

Letter 2297.—Not in C.; reprinted from Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iii. p. 301.

[1] See *Gent. Mag.* 1782, p. 189.

2298. To the Rev. William Mason.

Saturday night, late, April 1782.

I have so overwhelmed you with letters lately, that this shall be a very short one; but when you have pleased me, I must tell you so. I met Lord John Cavendish this evening at Gloucester House; he told me how obligingly you had behaved to him, and how wise and temperate your resolutions had been; you have done all I wished, which was to allow time for trial. If new ministers act like the old they deserve no favour, and, of all men, I shall not be their apologist. Their own sense, I should think, would tell them that they can never be favourites were they desirous, for the last have made it impossible for any successors to merit equal grace. We have neither dominions, money, nor credit enough to sacrifice on the altar of flattery to render the idol so propitious as it was to the predecessors. If these sincerely attempt reparation, *and continue united*, their labours may produce some good, and that good and those effects may maintain them. To those reflections I leave them: I shall neither be of their councils nor counsel for them, if they prove not what they ought to be.

I wish it was possible to give you a full account of a tragedy that has just been lent to me; an adequate one is totally impossible. The Bishop-Count of Bristol, whom I met t'other night at Mrs. Delany's, desired to send me a play, that he confessed he thought equal to the noblest flights of Shakespeare. Such an honour was not to be refused. Arrived the thickest of quartos, full as the egg of an ostrich; with great difficulty I got through it in two days. It is on the story of Lord Russell. John Lilburne himself could not have more Whig-zeal. The style, extremely deficient in grammar, is flogged up to more extravagant

rants than Statius's or Claudian's, with a due proportion of tumbles into the kennel. The devils and damnation supply every curse with brimstone, and hell's sublime is coupled with Newgate, St. James's, and Stocks Market[1]; every scene is detached, and each as long as an act; and every one might be omitted without interrupting the action —for plot or conduct there is none. Jefferies and Father Petre open the drama, and scourge one another up to the blackest pitch of iniquity. They are relieved by Algernon Sidney and Lord Howard[2]; the first rants like a madman and damns the other to the pit of hell. Lady Russell is not a whit less termagant. The good Earl of Bedford, on the contrary, is as patient as Job, and forgets the danger of his son to listen to the pathetic narrative of his old steward, whose wife had been Lord Russell's nurse, and died at seeing him sent to the Tower. The second act begins, and never ends, with Lord Bedford's visit to Newgate, where he gives money to the gaoler for leave to see his son. The gaoler chouses him, calls him Emperor of Newgate, and promises to support his dignity by every act of royal tyranny; compares himself to Salmoneus, and talks of nabobs, Stocks Alley, and Whitfield. Lord Russell comes to the grate, gives more money equally in vain. At last the monarch-gaoler demands 1,000*l.*, Russell promises it: the gaoler tenders a promissory note. Lord Russell takes it to sign, and find it stipulates 7,000*l.* and so on. King Charles and the Duke of York enter, quarrel about religion, but agree on cutting Lord Essex's[3] throat, with many such pathetic amenities. The last act contains the whole trial

LETTER 2298.—[1] On the site of the present Mansion House; it was removed thence in 1737.

[2] William Howard (d. 1694), third Baron Howard, of Escrick, who informed against Algernon Sidney and Lord Russell.

[3] Arthur Capel (1632–1683), first Earl of Essex of his family. He was found dead with his throat cut, in the Tower, where he had been imprisoned on suspicion of complicity in the Rye House Plot.

verbatim, with the pleadings of the Attorney and Solicitor Generals; Tillotson and Burnet are called to the prisoner's character—in vain; he is condemned. Lord Bedford falls at the King's feet, begging his son's life; the King tells him he teases him to death, and that he had rather be still in Scotland listening to nine hours' sermons delivered—

Through the funnel
Of noses lengthened down into proboscis.

This is the only flower I could retain of so dainty a garland. The piece concludes with Lady Russell's swooning on hearing the two strokes of the axe. Now you are a little acquainted with our second Shakespeare! Be assured that I have neither exaggerated in the character given, nor in the account of this tedious but very diverting tragedy; which, as the Earl-Bishop told me, Mr. Cumberland has had a mind to fit to the stage. What a hissing there would be between his ice and this cataract of sulphur! Adieu. I have broken my word and wrote a volume, but my pen was hurried on by the torrent of lava.

P.S. Cumberland himself has just published a lovely book[4], which will keep cold, though seasoned like his Calypso's potion for Telemachus, *with the hot Hesperian fly* disguised as an *humble* bee, but really a wasp. Like Soame Jenyns' anodyne, too, it was intended for *better times*.

There is a very sensible confutation of Dean Milles in the *Monthly Review* for March, which I never heard of till yesterday. Happy for him if he were only confuted.

P.S. I was going to seal my letter when I received yours, which obliges me to add more last words. Your conduct and measures were still wiser than I had heard in the very short conversation which I had with Lord John in our

[4] *Anecdotes of Eminent Painters in Spain.*

pinchbeck drawing-room[5]. I approve much your guarding against the late ministers and their tools; nay, I should not differ with you on shorter Parliaments: I should like five years, and consent to three, never to *annual*, which would be *anarchical*. My great repugnance would be to any alteration of the constitution of the House of Commons. Besides that, the present has retrieved its character and that of Parliaments. I am rootedly against touching the construction. Considering that we have no sacred law but precedents, if once we should begin to alter foundations, any evil might be copied thence. I do not defend precedents as such, but as they become sacred. If the nation believed that its liberty was maintained by witchcraft, I would not make an Act against sorcery. I therefore tell you honestly, that I am sorry the Duke of Richmond is so eager for his committee[6], and that I hope it will not succeed. Indeed, I am persuaded that it will produce nothing but variety of opinion, but they may create division, which is the great object of the great enemy; but enough of that at present. I am sure of my letters you must be sick—well, I shall be little here; I am going to Strawberry that I may hear no more politics. Whenever my friends are landed I trouble my head no more about them. I have not seen the Duke of Richmond or Mr. Conway this week, the rest I do not intend to see again, so I could learn nothing but of camps or gunpowder, which I defy either of them to make me understand or listen to.

2299. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, April 7, 1782.

As you have received my letters on the total revolution in the ministry, you will not be surprised that we have

[5] At Gloucester House. [6] On Parliamentary reform.

been occupied by that event, and have not run, as you expected, into great heats on the loss of Minorca. It has, indeed, made no more impression than if the King had lost his pocket-handkerchief. We are like the fish-woman, who, being reproached with the cruelty of skinning eels alive, replied, 'Ah, poor things, they be used to it!' She mistook her own habitude for theirs. We are at once so dissipated and so accustomed to misfortunes, that, though flayed to the bone, we forget the amputation of a finger in a moment. Were the new arrangement completed, I believe it would cause no more sensation than the capture of an island. As yet, everybody is asking, 'Who is to have this place, and who that? and who are the new peers?' For Minorca, we are satisfied with the encomiums showered on General Murray by the Duc de Crillon; we know poor Draper was mad[1]—and we have no farther curiosity.

The country and city seem to be pleased with the change; yet moderately too. The disgraced are extremely angry, and I dare to say will show their resentment in due time; but as only some of the greater and a very few of the lesser posts are yet disposed of, they who hope to escape in the general massacre take care to hold their tongues; and all will probably lie still, till they see whether the new ministers are lenient or severe. The recess of Parliament, too, for the holidays, re-elections, and usual jaunts into the country, and the never-to-be-violated festival of Newmarket, have dispersed many. The House of Commons meets to-morrow, and then things will begin to have a complexion. If the new administration can make a tolerable

LETTER 2299. — [1] Sir William Draper, Lieutenant-Governor of Minorca. He was on bad terms with Murray, under whom he served through the siege of Fort St. Philip. On returning home Draper drew up twenty-nine charges of misconduct against Murray, who was tried by court martial, and honourably acquitted on all but two trivial points.

peace, and carry any popular bills, they may maintain themselves for a time; yet I do not look on the present system as very stable. Bad as the last it would be difficult to be; and as ruinous it cannot be, for we have not half so much to lose as we have lost.

I do not send you lists of changes, for all are not yet made; and, while the undetermined are in suspense, it would be only giving you guesses that would want corrections, or unfounded reports. The genuine alterations you will find in the *Gazette*. A long catalogue of new peers was expected. Only three have yet kissed hands; Sir Fletcher Norton, Dunning, and Admiral Keppel[2].

I must now answer yours of March 19th. In my last, I begged you to assist Mrs. Damer in her distress on her aunt's disorder. You would want no spur to good offices there.

I am sorry I can by no means comply with Cav. Mozzi's request of taking the whole arbitration on myself, or of calling in Mr. Duane. The latter does not depend on me, since Mr. Sharpe persuaded my Lord not to agree to him. I do not know that my Lord would submit to my sole arbitrage—but if he would I could not accept it. I should be so disposed to decide against my Lord, as I think his claim wrong, that I should set out too partially, and that would be improper. Mr. Morrice is come to his villa at Chiswick, and I suppose will soon be in town—but I have not heard from him or my Lord's lawyers for many weeks. Mozzi had better have taken my advice and come to England himself. Here I could have assisted him—but I cannot write all I think; nor put myself into his power by letters that he might show, and so commit me to serve his own cause. I have no reason to think him capable of betraying

[2] Norton was created Lord Grantley, Dunning Lord Ashburton, and Keppel Viscount Keppel.

me, but I certainly do not know him enough to put such confidence in him. Had I nothing to do in the cause, I could speak my opinion. If I am counsel for my Lord, I must not betray his interests. In short, I never liked being employed, and will not take the whole on myself. *This* you will say to Mozzi; but not all I have said to you. He, perhaps, because I do not comply with all he asks, may think I am deceiving him—if so, I shall be unlucky, for my Lord and his lawyers must have seen that my opinion is not favourable to my nephew. At present, I can do no more than write to Mr. Morrice, and inquire if he thinks himself able, or like to be, to undertake the business.

For what the Chevalier says, that it must be against my Lord's interest to keep the affair in suspense, and that there must be a method of bringing all affairs to a conclusion, I reply, that the suspense tells me that my Lord thinks the contrary, and apprehends our decision. As to the *must be* method, he knows little of *our* law and lawyers —but the present case is removed from lawyers to a private reference, which Mr. Morrice's bad health has delayed: and the apprehension of my inclining to Mozzi's side has made my Lord's lawyers not hurry it—you may judge then whether they would let him consent to my sole arbitrage, or to devolving the whole to so equitable a man as Mr. Duane--I reserve the rest of my paper for to-morrow.

Friday, 12th.

I was so often interrupted on Tuesday, that I utterly forgot to finish this letter and send it to the office. It does not signify, as nothing in it was urgent but the answer to Mr. Mozzi, and now I am able to send him another kind of answer. Mr. Morrice has been in town for a few hours, and can look over the papers at his villa at Chiswick.

I have sent to Lucas for them, and expect them every day,—but till I have seen them, I advise the Chevalier not to be too sanguine, for by this time I conclude they will have amassed claims, and made the whole cause too intricate for us to unravel easily. Lord Orford, I hear, is to be removed from the Rangership of the two Parks[3]. It was intended by the new ministers to leave him in the King's Bedchamber; which out of respect they did not mean to touch. Whether his dismission from the former post had been notified to him or not, I cannot tell. I should think it had; for he has sent his resignation of the Bedchamber also, though saying it is on account of his lameness. He has long had a very swelled leg, which I suppose balances or drains his head, and prevents it from quite oversetting again. Indeed, as he has been so warm an advocate for the late abominable system, I must a little wonder, if he is angry, that he has palliated the cause of his resignation—but who can argue on a lunatic?

It looks very much as if we should be reconciled with Holland; and, as Russia espouses that temper, I should hope pacification would spread farther. How blessed would that moment be! But we have another grievous thorn in our very side! Ireland is little less estranged than America; and a most wicked coxcomb, one Eden, secretary to the late Lord Lieutenant[4], has dared to do his utmost to heighten the rupture[5]. As he had not sense or judgement enough to cloak his folly, it has fallen on his own head with general

[3] This did not happen till the following year.

[4] The Earl of Carlisle.

[5] Lord Carlisle and Eden left Ireland in the midst of the agitation caused by Grattan's efforts to secure legislative independence for Ireland. Eden refused to supply the new ministers with any information as to the state of Irish affairs. On April 8 (the day on which the House met after the adjournment) he moved for the repeal of an Act of George I in which the legislative supremacy of England was expressly asserted. Fox took Eden severely to task for not allowing the newly appointed ministers time to deliberate on such an important matter. Eden finally withdrew his motion.

indignation; but, as Irish heads are not better poised, we fear consequences. You will see the detail in the papers, too long for a letter. The late administration had neglected and inflamed that business, as they have acted in almost every other. Such grievous waste and negligence appear from every office, that it is very doubtful whether they will fall so lightly as they expected. Though they will be very ready to accuse, it may chance that they will be accused first. They have provoked and invited four wars, neglected all, succeeded in none, rejected every overture of peace while tampering for peace, and by profusion and carelessness thrown away the means of making war any longer. As ministers, generals, treasurers, negotiators, they have proved themselves as incapable as any set of men who ever overturned a great country; and in the rapidity of their achievements they have exceeded all. Strange it was that they did not fall sooner! And yet their fall was instantaneous and unforeseen! My sentiments about them have been uniform. I restrain rather than exaggerate them. Every country in which we were concerned testifies to the truth of what I say. I reap no advantage from their fall, nor shall; fully content if peace is restored, and as much as can be of our constitution, credit, and felicity. Adieu!

2300. To the Rev. William Cole.

April 13, 1782.

Your partiality to me, my good Sir, is much overseen, if you think me fit to correct your Latin. Alas! I have not skimmed ten pages of Latin these dozen years. I have dealt in nothing but English, French, and a little Italian, and do not think, if my life depended on it, that I could write four lines of pure Latin. I have had occasion once or twice to speak that language, and soon found that all

my verbs were Italian with Roman terminations. I would not on any account draw you into a scrape, by depending on my skill in what I have half forgotten. But you are in the metropolis of Latium. If you distrust your own knowledge, which I do not, especially from the specimen you have sent me, surely you must have good critics at your elbow to consult.

In truth, I do not love Roman inscriptions in lieu of our own language, though, if anywhere, proper in an University—neither can I approve writing what the Romans themselves would not understand. What does it avail to give a Latin tail to a Guildhall[1]? Though the word used by us moderns, would *major* convey to Cicero the idea of a mayor? *Architectus*, I believe, is the right word;—but I doubt whether *veteris jam perantiquae* is classic for a dilapidated building—but do not depend on me; consult some better judge.

Though I am glad of the late revolution, a word for which I have infinite reverence, I shall certainly not dispute with you thereon. I abhor exultation. If the change produces peace, I shall make a bonfire in my heart. Personal interest I have none; you and I shall certainly never profit by the politics to which we are attached.

The *Archæologic Epistle* I admire exceedingly, though sorry it attacks Mr. Bryant, whom I love and respect. The Dean is so absurd and obstinate an oaf, that he deserves to be ridiculed. Is anything more hyperbolic than his tedious preferences of Rowley to Homer, Shakespeare, and Milton? Whether Rowley or Chatterton was the author, are the poems in any degree comparable to those authors? Is not a ridiculous author an object of ridicule? I do not even guess at your meaning in your conclusive paragraph

LETTER 2300. — [1] Cole had submitted to Walpole a Latin inscription for the Cambridge Guildhall, built from designs by James Essex.

on that subject: dictionary-writer I suppose alludes to Johnson, but surely you do not equal the compiler of a dictionary to a genuine poet? Is a brickmaker on a level with Mr. Essex? Nor can I hold that exquisite wit and satire are Billingsgate. If they were, Milles and Johnson would be able to write an answer to the *Epistle*. I do as little guess whom you mean that got a pension by Toryism —if Johnson too, he got a pension for having abused pensioners, and yet took one himself—which was contemptible enough. Still less know I who preferred opposition to principles—which is not a very common case. Whoever it was, as Pope says,

> The way he took was strangely round about.

With Mr. Chamberlayne[2] I was very little acquainted, nor ever saw him six times in my life. It was with Lord Walpole's branch he was intimate, and to whose eldest son Mr. Chamberlayne's father had been tutor. This poor gentleman had an excellent character universally, and has been more feelingly regretted than almost any man I ever knew. This is all I am able to tell you.

I forgot to say, I am also in the dark as to the person you guess for the author of the *Epistle*. It cannot be the same person to whom it is generally attributed, who certainly neither has a pension nor has deserted his principles, nor has reason to be jealous of those he laughs at, for their abilities are far below his. I do not mean that it is his, but is attributed to him. It was sent to me, nor did I ever see a line of it till I read it in print. In one respect it is most credible to be his, for there are not two such inimitable poets in England. I smiled on reading

[2] Edward Chamberlayne, recently appointed one of the Joint Secretaries to the Treasury. Overcome by a sense of his responsibilities, he committed suicide on April 6 by throwing himself from the window of a house in Parliament Street.

it, and said to myself, 'Dr. Glynn is well off to have escaped.'—His language indeed about me has been Billingsgate—but peace be to his and the manes of Rowley, if they have ghosts, who never existed. The *Epistle* has put an end to that controversy, which was grown so tiresome. I rejoice at having kept my resolution of not writing a word more on that subject. The Dean had swollen it to an enormous bladder: the Archæologic poet pricked it with a pin, a sharp one indeed, and it burst.

Pray send me a better account of yourself if you can.

Yours most sincerely,

H. W.

2301. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, April 13, 1782.

For forty good years I have made it my rule not to ask a favour[1] of any minister, that he might not think he had a claim on my servility, or call me ungrateful if I did not accept his draft. Of Mr. Conway (when Secretary of State before, and now) I have asked no favour, because I have too good claim on his friendship not to distress him if he could not grant it, or not to interfere with what he might owe to others. I did not fear his expecting any dirt from me. I have as full confidence in the virtue of the Duke of Richmond, and though I have no strong title to solicit him, the moment I received your letter I wrote to his Grace and enclosed your brother's letter. As this was yesterday evening, and as I have received no answer, I conclude that he is informing himself of the nature of the office, and has not partiality enough for me, which I approve, to promise me blindly what I ask. I told him that you would not more than I pay the compliment of being obliged to most of his associates. I

Letter 2301.—[1] Mason wished to obtain a place as Store-Keeper of the Garrison at Hull for his brother-in-law, William Sherman.

stated the confidence you had placed in his good intentions, though I avowed that I neither approved of his or your desire of touching the construction of the House of Commons; and in short if he grants the boon it will be owing to your merit, not to my intercession.

Apropos to the Duke, I can now tell you by the post something I only hinted at; in short, you political speculatists have sown such doubts in his very delicate and scrupulous mind, that I wish he does not carry them much further than you would desire. He is so struck with the idea of all men having a right to choose their representatives, that he is averse to the bill for excluding contractors (those locusts) from the House of Commons. I knew this long ago, and a melancholy advantage he will give to the enemy if he joins with their iniquitous phalanx. Your friend and Archbishop has convened his black colleagues to consult on opposing that most essential bill. None of the bench but St. Asaph [2] and Peterborough [3] were at Lord Rockingham's levee, where I should have concluded they would all have met, but either they are reserved for opposition to all the constitutional or reforming bills, or have calculated that the life of Cornwallis [4] is worth more than the duration of this ministry, or rather they reserve themselves for opposition because the odds lie on that side.

I also knew that the Duke of Richmond absented himself from Parliament because his friends did not come into the plans relative to the alterations of Parliament; indeed, after Mr. Conway's successful motion, the late ministers were on the point of being beaten. The Lord Advocate turned the debate, and saved them by urging that Mr. Fox was engaged to support those alterations, which would be so unpalatable to most of the members. I could then only hint these things

[2] Dr. Shipley. [3] Dr. Hinchliffe.
[4] Archbishop of Canterbury.

to you darkly; I mention them to show you, that being on the spot, I saw many inconveniences arising to the cause from too positive adherence to speculations on which it was impossible to unite the many; and therefore if I have appeared too positive myself, you will excuse me, as I did not act from mere opinions of my own. As *to disunite* is the motto of the enemy, *Union* must be ours; or—but I doubt the first is much more practicable than the second.

What do you say to that wicked jackanapes Eden[5]? The bomb he threw, and which, though it fell on his own head, may have perverse consequences, is supposed to have been put into his hands by the fiend Loughborough, with whom he was shut up the whole preceding day.

Cumberland's book is called *Anecdotes of Spanish Painters.* To show he has been in Spain (of which he boasts, though with little reason) he spells every name (that is not Spanish) as they do; the Fleming Rubens he calls (to Englishmen) *Pedro Pablo* Rubens and Vitruvius *Viturbio.* Two pages are singularly delectable; one of them was luckily criticized this morning in the *Public Advertiser*, and saves me the trouble of transcribing; the other is a *chef-d'œuvre* of proud puppyism. Speaking of subjection of Spain to the Carthaginians, he says, 'When Carthage was her mistress it is not easy to conceive a situation more degrading for a noble people than to bear the yoke of *mercantile* republicans, and do homage at the shop-boards of upstart demagogues.' Would not one think it was a Vere or a Percy that wrote this impertinent condolence, and not a little *commis*? He goes on—'Surely it is in human nature *to prefer* the tyranny of the most absolute despot that ever wore a crown, to the mercenary and imposing insults of a trader. *Who* would not rather appeal to a *court* than a counting-house?' a most worthy ejaculation. This in a free commercial country, and

[5] See note 5 on letter to Mann of April 7, 1782.

from a petty scribe of office[6]! My grandfather (my mother's father) was a Danish timber-merchant; an honest sensible Whig, and I am very proud of him, as I do believe he would have treated a clerk of Lord Bolingbroke with proper contempt, if he had told him that it was better that all the tradesmen of London should be liable to be sent to the galleys, than that a jack in office should be made to wait in a back shop.

You are mistaken about Mr. Sherlock, who I confess I think has parts, though you and others whose judgements I honour are of a different opinion. I have seen the real author, and had begun a long account of him but laid it aside to answer you on your commission, but I go to Strawberry to-morrow and will finish it if I have time, for it is curious. I shall return on Tuesday, when I shall be very happy, if I am able, to send you a favourable answer about Mr. Sherman.

2302. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, April 14, 1782.

I am shocked at myself for having made sport, though innocently, at the tragedy of *Lord Russell*, as I have since seen the author, who is a poor worthy Irish clergyman, his name Stratford, aged about five-and-forty, of great parts, and not a little mad, as Lord Bristol has owned to me. I found Mr. Stratford so modest, so humble, and so ignorant of the world, that I talked to him very frankly, and in the gentlest terms I could use, representing to him the total impossibility of his play being acted in its present state. I said I reckoned it immoral to flatter any author, in a manner to draw him into exposing himself, &c. He allowed all my objections, which I stated; thanked me with the warmest gratitude,

[6] Cumberland was Secretary to the Board of Trade.

and then broke out on the *magnanimity* of Mr. Cumberland, who had condescended to transcribe his whole play, and begun to alter it. As that magnanimous doctor is so rank a Tory I was still more surprised.

The poor man told me he had brought his family over, at an expense he could ill afford, to get some of his plays acted, for he has also written four comedies. Methinks my Lord of Bristol-Derry had better have given him some preferment, than let him write himself into a jail, as he probably will. I offered to look over one of his comedies; the next morning he brought me the first scene of one, but it is so metaphorical, so ungrammatical, and he has such a brogue that I did not guess at the meaning of one sentence. I was forced to take the book out of his hand and read it myself, when I found a profusion of wit and ideas, similes and metaphors so strangely coupled together in the most heterogeneous bands, that every sentence would require a commentary, and deserves one, though you may judge thence how unfit for the stage. He has no notion of simplicity, character, or nature; nor I believe of comedy itself, for he owned that he had never looked into Congreve or Vanbrugh; but the strange part of all is that in the whole scene there is scarce a verb! all consists of metaphors in apposition and allusions in hints. He laughed when I showed him that there was nothing but substantives and adjectives. Besides these works, he has a poem written long ago in blank verse, on the battle of Fontenoy, in nine cantos. In this he has not discarded one of the eight parts of speech; there are sublime passages, but little invention or novelty, at least in the specimen that I have seen; and the images are too fierce. This he is going to publish by subscription for present subsistence, and I shall toil to raise some money for him. He formerly printed a translation of the first book of Milton into Greek, and the University of Dublin supervised it for him. He

repeated some of the lines to the Bishop of St. Asaph in my room, who admired them, and he quoted Hebrew as glibly; and there the Bishop understood him no more than I did his Greek, which I have quite forgotten. The Duke of Devonshire has got his comedy, and I am sorely afraid the poor man's madness will be a jest instead of a matter of compassion; but I shall at least endeavour to make them pay for laughing at a man that ought to be respected. He cannot bear the name of Johnson, for his paltry acrimony against Milton; in short he is a Whig to the marrow.

Last night before I came out of town, I was at a kind of pastoral opera written by Lady Craven, and acted prettily by her own and other children: you will scold me again for not telling you the title, but in truth I forgot to ask it. There was imagination in it, but not enough to carry off five acts. The Chancellor was there *en titre d'office*, not as head of the law, but as Cicisbeo to the authoress—his countenance is so villainous that he looked more like assassin to the husband. Lady Harcourt said he wanted nothing but a red coat and a black wig to resemble the murderers in *Macbeth*. The late Premier[1] consoles himself with *bons mots*. On Tuesday in the House of Commons he sat opposite to the Treasury Bench: somebody said, 'I see, my Lord, you have taken your place'; he replied, 'Yes, a place for life.' It was better what he said on the first *Gazette* of the new administration, 'I was abused for lying *Gazettes*, but there are more lies in this one than in all mine—yesterday his Majesty *was pleased* to appoint the Marquis of Rockingham, the Duke of Richmond, Mr. Charles Fox, &c., &c., &c.' It was not a bad answer of Burke to one of the late gang who sneered at Lord Effingham's kissing hands[2], 'Yes, and he is in the very coat in which he was killed at the riots.'

LETTER 2302.—[1] Lord North. [2] As Treasurer of the Household.

I reserve the rest of my paper for the Duke of Richmond's answer, which I hope to find favourable—on Tuesday.

Tuesday evening.

I am mortified, for I am come to town and have found neither letter nor message from the Duke! however, I cannot interpret it ill—for surely *No* is easily said. Still I am disappointed, for when one breaks a good resolution, one should like to have been obliged immediately, and enabled to notify the favour directly to the person for whom one solicits; at least I had set my heart on such a proceeding towards you. I found the note you sent me by Mr. Sherman; I had not named the value of the place, so it is not necessary to contradict it, nor will I stoop to lessen the worth of what I asked, for as I had great pleasure in breaking my resolution to oblige you, I will not haggle to obtain half of what I thought I asked. I did not hesitate when I thought it double, but it is plain I am not used to be solicitous, when I do not like the least delay, which I think blasts a favour.

2303. To George Hardinge.

Berkeley Square, April 18, 1782.

I have great pleasure, dear Sir, in your preferment[1], and sincerely wish you joy. I have no doubt but your abilities will continue my satisfaction as long as I can be witness to their success. I did not expect to live to see the door opened to constitutional principles. That they have recovered their energy is a proof of their excellence; and I hope that, as they have surmounted their enemies, they will not be ever betrayed by their friends. Yours heartily,

H. Walpole.

Letter 2303.—Not in C.; reprinted from Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. viii. p. 529.

[1] Hardinge had been appointed Solicitor-General to the Queen.

2304. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, April 22, 1782.

You will no doubt have guessed the reason why you have not heard from me again on the subject of the commission you gave me. Had I received a favourable answer, I should have been happy to tell you so instantly. Even a refusal I should not have concealed. The truth is, no answer at all has been vouchsafed; you know me too well, I believe, to be surprised at my not applying again; and I flatter myself that you would have been displeased if I had. Nay, do not laugh at me for having imagined, at my age, that there was one man in whom I could place full confidence, who I could suppose would be the same in power as when out, still I will be just. Perhaps vanity made me mistake civilities for friendship. Perhaps I presumed too much; and though I protest I thought I was not only obliging you but serving the person I solicited by putting it into his power to oblige *you*, it is very possible that I had no right to ask even so small a favour, and so well founded. I stand corrected—I shall never be so arrogant again. Nay, unless I see that person changed in *essentials*, I will not, because he has had no attention for me, conclude that his virtue is shaken by such tinsel trappings as he has attained, and which being so common to the most worthless of his rank, can surely not be flattering to the individual. At least I, who have more pride than most men, should never be proud of what are the appendages to birth and rank, and imply no merit in oneself.

For the trial I have made, be assured I do not repent it; whatever opens one's eyes is useful. It is good to have one's vanity reprimanded, nor can I be sorry to have shown you how zealous I was to oblige *you*, though by the manner in

which I feel the rebuff, you may judge how little I am accustomed to ask favours, so little, that this slight will account to you for my not being able to tell you anything more than you may see in the newspapers. I should not have *haunted* the new ministers—*now* I would as soon step into a cave of scorpions, or connect with the late ministers. My principles will not alter, whether I am neglected or whether they who professed the same abandon them, nor, unless they do, will I think they do. They have a difficult part to act, and nothing yet promises them any success, so deeply had the last wretches plunged us. The Dutch are haughty, obstinate, or too much in the power of France. Ireland adheres to its point[1]. The combined squadrons of the three hostile nations will amount to fourscore sail in the Channel; ours but to twenty-seven. I do not think that twenty-seven ought to beat eighty, because I concluded I had a claim on one who had long professed great regard for me: nor do I hold the new ministers accountable for the impotence of a nation that had been made eunuch by their predecessors.

If I knew where to find Mr. Sherman, I would have sent and begged him not to lose his time in town, or if he can find better interest than my own I should be happy to have him succeed. If I were not afraid of mistaking my own wounded pride for his hardship, I should say he was ill-treated; but the first is so natural that I must be on my guard against myself; nor will I be unjust because I have duped myself, which I do believe I did, in construing great civilities into *tacit* professions, and in thinking the person in question loved me because I was an enthusiast to his virtues. Do not therefore let my blunder prevent Mr. Sherman from seeking better interest.

Mr. Stonhewer has lent me a copy (am I not to have one

Letter 2304.—[1] The attainment of legislative independence.

myself?) of your essay on church music. I was diverted by the only passage I understand, the 'Quavers on the generation of the Patriarchs.' Sir John Hawkins must have more sense or sensibility than I have, if he is hurt by a single word. I thank you for its not being more striking. He came in an hour ago just as I was finishing it, and I had a mind to show it to him, but I did not. You will not dislike the *sayings* of the time in lieu of the politics. The new administration is called the *Regency*, as they govern in the place of the King. Lord Effingham, from his strange figure and dress and his two staffs, as Deputy Earl Marshal and Treasurer of the Household, is called *the devil on two sticks*. I look on these sarcasms as buds of a new opposition. Adieu!

P.S. I forgot to tell you that lately Dr. Percy, the new Bishop of Dromore, told me or rather proved to me a curious anecdote. You know Professor Ferguson[2] denied positively in print that a Highland lad of his house (and in presence of Dr. Blair) recited some of the pretended poems of Ossian in Erse, which I think Dr. Blair has also denied. Dr. Percy has lately found, I believe, on coming to town two letters from Blair, which he had forgotten, about Lord Algernon Percy's board in Ferguson's house; and in both he mentions the fact of the lad's recitation in Ferguson's house and presence. I saw these letters myself, and so did Lord Ossory, the Bishop of St. Asaph, and one or two other persons who were with me. 'Well,' said I, 'Mr. Dean, and you will not print these letters to take off the accusation of falsehood from yourself?' He seemed afraid to do so. This timidity sets those Scotch impostors and their cabal in a still worse light than their forgeries, as it shows their persecution of all who oppose them.

[2] Adam Ferguson (1723–1816), Professor of Philosophy at Edinburgh.

2305. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, April 27, 1782.

You was in the right in your patience, and I extremely in the wrong in losing mine, yet to you alone am I excusable, for I was so eager to serve you in so slight and yet so reasonable a request, that I could not bear to wait even a few days for it. I met the Duke last night at Lady Aylesbury's; he came up to me with earnestness, begged my pardon for not having answered my letter, but had called twice at my house when I was out of town, which I had not heard. He told me the suit should be granted, but he had stayed to inquire whether Mr. Sherman had executed the business well for his father. Well, I am overjoyed on your account, but what do you think is the consequence?—that I never will ask any favour again. I see I am too proud; I felt the appearance of neglect too fiercely, and never, never will I do my few friends the injury of suspecting them wrongfully. My nature is too hasty for the commerce of the world, and is not corrected by such long acquaintance with it. I knew myself so far that for many years I have dealt little with mankind, and what is the event? Why, here am I with all the warmth of a boy! Oh, I am ashamed of myself! I will go to Strawberry to-morrow for three days and humble myself to the dust.

I have not received what you may trust I long for[1], but I suppose a private *hand* does not travel so fast as the post. The *Archæological Epistle* has not a gainsayer. Governor Pownall told me, as a *secret* discovery he had made, that it is certainly by the author of the *Heroic Epistle*. I have just received a letter from Scotland, in which the writer, Lord

Letter 2305.—[1] Probably Mason's eclogue, *The Dean and the Squire*.

Buchan, cites the former with high complacency. I have inundated you lately with so many quires that I shall not add a word to this.

2306. To Sir Horace Mann.

May 5, 1782.

I HAVE given the new administration time to breathe; that is, I did not send you details of removals and preferments, that were the mere business of taking possession, and which affect individuals, not the public, and consequently not you. Since their first entry, the most notifiable event, of that sort too, was the disposition of the Garters, given to one of the Princes [1], to the Dukes of Richmond and Devonshire, and to Lord Shelburne; the last a little unprecedented, as he is but a recent Irish earl, and a more recent English baron. The King had unaccountably reserved four—certainly, not on purpose for the three persons last named! Lord Ashburnham, to whom one had been promised, and who was still more unaccountably saved, as Groom of the Stole, by his Majesty, with the Duke of Montagu, when the new *regents* left him the choice of two for mercy, has resigned in dudgeon, and not very gratefully; as *two* Garters had certainly not been left to the King's nomination. The late success of Admiral Barrington [2] against the equipment from Brest is more substantial gilding, and illustrates the dawn of the new system. I wish I saw any symptoms of peace.

Reformation is begun, and is decorated with the King's name, who has given up many employments in the court and its purlieus. Other popular bills, that aim at ransoming

LETTER 2306. — [1] Prince William Henry (1765–1837), created Duke of Clarence, 1789; afterwards King as William IV.

[2] On April 20 Admiral Barrington's squadron fell in with a French convoy, and captured two men-of-war and eleven transports.

the House of Commons from its late servility to the crown, do not pass so glibly. The Chancellor[3] resists them tooth and nail in the other House, and, it is supposed, will not want support from his former associates in due time, nor perhaps from some of his new. These hints will prevent your surprise, should the new machine receive any jolt. There is another public business on the carpet, not connected with politics, that is no small one. Sir Thomas Rumbold, a nabob, swelled from nothing to a million, is likely to be obliged to disgorge[4].

A much more important business, Ireland, is yet unsettled. It must be settled, and to their own liking. These outlines will help you to a clue through the newspapers—I pretend to no more.

One of the Duchess of Gloucester's daughters is married. . . .[5] I am just come from Lady Laura's wedding with her cousin, Lord Chewton[6], at Gloucester House[7]. The Duke himself gave her away. I am returning thither for the court at night, when the Duchess receives compliments: but the married pair are gone out of town, though it is the depth of winter. Never was such a spring! After deluges of rain, we have had an east wind that has half-starved London; as a fleet of colliers cannot get in. Coals were sold yesterday at seven guineas a chaldron; nor is there an entire leaf yet on any tree. Yet I can prove it is past the first of May by a *bon mot* of George Selwyn that is much in fashion. He called on me that morning (the day the milkmaids and chimney-sweepers dance about with garlands): 'We have heard so much lately,' said he, 'of the *majesty of*

[3] Lord Thurlow.

[4] A Parliamentary inquiry into Rumbold's conduct in India took place in 1783, but came to nothing.

[5] In this letter as hitherto printed, the sentence 'the ceremony took place this morning' is substituted for a sentence which is erased in the original.

[6] George Waldegrave, eldest son of John, third Earl Waldegrave, whom he succeeded in the title in 1784. *Walpole.*

[7] Now Grosvenor House.

the people, that, meeting the chimney-sweepers with their crowns of gilt paper, I suppose they are taken for the *princes of the people*, and that this is a Collar-day.'

When are you to have the Pope returned on your hands? I hear the Emperor walled up every door but one of the palace in which he is lodged, and set guards at the door.

Your last is of April the 13th. You had not then heard of the revolution, but was still talking of Minorca; which was totally absorbed in the late change, and has not emerged since, nor do I think it will, at least not from want of matter. Such a revulsion as the late one may stun; it does not compose. Virtue and reformation may give the new ministers some momentary popularity, but it will not be equally durable with the resentment of the displaced and the cashiered; nor do I take the late crew to be so punctilious as the late opposition: nor is the nation so very virtuously disposed as to be genuine admirers of reformation. People must be wondrously changed, if they vote as readily from esteem as they used to do for pay. Esteem too is no principle of union. When men are paid, they must vote for what they are bidden to vote. They will have a thousand vagaries when at liberty to vote for what they fancy right or not. The ministers must continually propose or support popular questions, or even yield to those who are running races of popularity with them; while the advocates for prerogative are crying out against inroads made on it.

All this, I have no doubt, will happen, unless some master-genius gains the ascendant. Mr. Fox alone seems to be such a man. He already shines as greatly in place as he did in opposition, though infinitely more difficult a task. He is now as indefatigable as he was idle. He has perfect temper, and not only good humour but good nature; and, which is the first quality in a Prime Minister of a free

country, has more common sense than any man, with amazing parts, that are neither ostentatious nor affected. Lord North had wit and good humour, but neither temper, nor feeling, nor activity, nor good breeding. Lord Chatham was a blazing meteor that scattered war with success, but sunk to nothing in peace. Perhaps I am partial to Charles Fox, because he resembles my father in good sense—I wish he had his excellent constitution too; yet his application to business may preserve his life, which his former dissipation constantly endangered. Another advantage we have is in Mr. Conway's being at the head of the army. With him nobody stands in competition. His military knowledge is unquestionably without a rival. His predecessor, Lord Amherst, was as much below all rivals. There is no word for him but downright stupidity. Had five thousand French landed while he commanded, he was totally incapable of preparing or putting in motion the least opposition. I could tell you facts that would not be believed, though known to every ensign in the army. The fleet will now be united, and want none of its best officers. Lord Sandwich, though certainly a man of abilities, was grown obstinate, peevish, intractable, and was not born for great actions. He loved subtlety and tricks and indirect paths, qualities repugnant to genius. Still, I conclude, as I used to do before the change, let us have peace! We certainly are so far nearer to it, that these ministers will leave nothing vigorous unattempted while the war lasts. The last neither thought of peace, nor took one proper step towards success in the war. The nation must have been utterly undone, had they remained a year longer in power. They thought their power secure, and really cared about nothing else; and many of them and all their tools and all their creatures wished for, and talked for, arbitrary power, as a compensation for all our misfortunes and disgraces. Indeed, I tell

you the truth. I have seen it and known it long, and have not the smallest private interest in my opinions. From my father's death to my own it will be evident that I never received a favour for myself from any other minister of whatever party.

2307. To the Rev. William Mason.

May 7, 1782.

If I did not know that you can do just what you will and can write in any and all styles, I should not have expected that you could couch the subtleties of metaphysics in short verse[1]. Nay, you have done so too well, for I doubt whether the general run of readers and bishops will understand your double-edged irony, it is so closely reasoned. I must have the second part too, for it is incomplete, nor have you lashed the most offensive parts of the squire's book, especially the pages 145 and 147. The preface and notes are excellent too, and I thank you particularly for Butler's niche[2]. The certificate[3] will puzzle and perplex. One Baines[4], I hear, is now thought the author of the *Archæologic Epistle*. I am persuaded that there will be a controversy, and that some will maintain that the one is by the *Heroic Epistle* writer, and others

Letter 2307.—[1] Walpole refers to *The Dean and the Squire*.

[2] John Butler, Bishop of Oxford. Mason chose a sentence from a letter written by him for the motto of his poem.

[3] A certificate placed by Mason at the end of *The Dean and the Squire*. It runs as follows:—'Whereas a late ingenious and anonymous production, entitled *An Archæological Epistle*, has been attributed to my pen, I think proper to declare, that, however I may approve the sentiments therein contained, I am above wearing any man's laurels; and that I conceive those, who do not discriminate between my style and that author's, have as little critical acumen as he seems to allow to his reverend correspondent.

(Signed)
'Malcolm Macgregor.
'Knightsbridge.'

[4] John Baynes (1758–1787), barrister and miscellaneous writer. He was a Yorkshireman and a Whig, and was a friend of Mason. Baynes took the *Archæological Epistle* to the printer.

that *The Squire and Dean* is, while many will go on believing that the latter Dean is Milles, though they do not know how. I wish *Fresnoy* was ready to increase the perplexity.

The papers will tell you that confusion is already set on foot in the House of Lords. There is one too who urges on economy [5] in order to drive the new ministers to make more enemies, and so deprive them of the means of making friends. I do not believe he will find much difficulty in getting rid of most of them. That perhaps would be fortunate should it happen soon, while they are in the bloom of their popularity, and before they have lost none of it and *before they quarrel amongst themselves*, but the last is most likely to arrive first. My own opinion is that there will be great confusion before any permanent settlement. The present system was not intended nor is constituted to last, nor have I a higher idea of the abilities of those who I believe are meant to succeed. The old party will recover their spirits every day, with pretty near one principle of action, while the new will split into petty divisions, and run races of popularity with each other. Perhaps after some struggles and some more revolutions, the whole will subside into the two ancient divisions under the colours of prerogative and liberty: but these may be only my conjectures or visions, and therefore I will tire you with no more of them. A master genius may give a different turn to the whole, but as yet there are so many chiefs, and so few fit to be so, that any system will be lame and hobbling for some time. In truth, I discern but one capable of being the leader. I will not name him, lest you and I should not agree. Adieu!

P.S. Lady Laura and Lord Chewton were married two days ago. You talk of bad weather in your last;—it has

[5] The King.

lasted here to this instant: there is not a leaf big enough to cover a caterpillar's pudenda. But we do not seem likely to want any shade. I suppose they who affect to like it, which they will if it is not to be had, will build conservatories to bring their trees forward, to which there will be a double temptation, as coals are risen to enormous price; and though ministers must court popularity by economy, economy is not a jot more in fashion even amongst the people. Not a beggar's civil list but is two or three quarters in arrear: and give the King his due, I question whether he is half so much in debt in proportion as the lowest of his tradesmen.

2308. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, May 14, 1782.

I am very sorry for the shock you have had in the loss of your niece, dear Sir; and so I am for my old friend Dr. Apthorpe[1]. I would say more, but as I am confined with an uncommon complaint for me, a violent cold, cough, and tightness on my breast, for which I have been blooded two days together, with all possible success, yet as my arm is bound up, it is rather awkward to write—however, I could not help telling you how sincerely I partake of whatever affects you, nor defer complying with your request. I prefer sending a card, lest Margaret[2], who is no scholar but by rote, should make any mistake, in giving her verbal or written orders—to which she is less accustomed than to cards.

I hope you will soon recover your indisposition and flurry, and am

Ever yours,

H. W.

Letter 2308.—Not in C.; printed in the 4to ed. (1818) of the Letters to Cole; now printed from original in British Museum.

[1] Cole's half-brother.

[2] The housekeeper at Strawberry Hill.

2309. To John Fenn.

Berkeley Square, May 15, 1782.

I should have thanked you immediately, if I had been able, Sir, for your kind communications and very sensible observations on the facsimile of the pretended writing of Rowley; but I have been extremely ill with a fever and oppression on my breast, and am still too weak to write more than a few lines.

Your remarks, Sir, corroborate extremely the many other probabilities of the imposition in the supposed poems and writings of Rowley; and would undoubtedly give much satisfaction if you would print them in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, in which a considerable part of the controversy is carried on.

I was extremely pleased with the letter of William of Worcester, independently of Rowley, &c. It is very curious —indeed I did not know that there was so much as a *private* letter extant of that very turbulent period. This gives me, Sir, a high idea of your treasure[1]. If I was less struck when you mentioned it formerly, it was that I did not advert to that scarcity so much as I have since this Rowleian controversy has been agitated. If you could select any new curious facts, Sir, relating to that period (I do not mean, to that controversy) you would much oblige literary virtuosos, especially were you to print the letters themselves, or the interesting extracts.

You are doubtless in the right, Sir, in suspecting that Chatterton had no idea of old writings on *paper* in that age. Many circumstances concur to show that the quickness of

Letter 2309.—Not in C.; now first printed from original in possession of Mr. Arthur H. Frere.

[1] The MS. of the *Paston Letters*, purchased by Fenn from a chemist at Diss, in Norfolk.

his parts betrayed him into many blunders, and did not suffer him to take time in fathoming all that was necessary to be known by an impostor, who ought to go through a severer, and even a more mechanic course of studies, than is requisite to an original genius. Chatterton perhaps was naturally more formed to be a master genius in forgery than in invention, but not having *taken his degrees*, discovered his inexperience too early. Imperfections, that would only have indicated talents in an original writer, were fatal to an impostor. Whatever the latter forgets, omits or misapplies, detects him more certainly than what he commits.

I am, with great regard and gratitude, Sir,

Your much obliged

and obedient humble servant,

Hor. Walpole.

2310. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, May 18, 1782.

Fortune's weathercock has changed once more in our favour; we were drowning, but now ride again in triumph through the streets of our capital, the ocean. Two days ago, we learnt the conquest of the principal Dutch settlement—on Ceylon[1]; and, as we have not many tributary monarchs left, I suppose, shall bully that Emperor, like our predecessors. We expect to be up to the ears in rubies, elephants, cinnamon, and pepper. However, as the House of Commons has at last had the decency to call some of our abominable nabobs to account, and are going to squeeze Sir Thomas Rumbold's sacks of diamonds and rupees, it is to be hoped that the poor Ceylonists will be plundered less impudently. I am partial to them, having been intimate

Letter 2310.—[1] Trincomalee surrendered to the English under Admiral Hughes on January 11, 1782.

with them, as the Isle of Serendip, from the days of the *Arabian Nights*.

But riches and cinnamon are baubles in comparison of glory. To-day we hear that Sir George Rodney has defeated —ay, and taken—Monsieur de Grasse in his own ship, *La Ville de Paris*, of a hundred and ten guns, three others of seventy-four, one of sixty-four, and sunk another of the line[2]. We have lost three hundred, have seven hundred wounded (whom, alas! a West India climate will not recover), three captains, and Lord Robert Manners[3], a fine young fellow, only brother of the Duke of Rutland, who died of his wounds on the passage—but not one ship; yet you see the action must have been bloody. Rodney was recalled by the new Admiralty, but recovers from his falls with marvellous agility. The late ministers are thus robbed of a victory that ought to have been theirs; but the mob do not look into the almanac. The City of Westminster had just nominated our young Cicero, Mr. William Pitt, to replace Sir George as their representative at the next general election; the latter being a little under a cloud from his rapacity at St. Eustatia. Now, Mr. Pitt must exert some oratorical modesty, and beg not to dethrone a hero!

These naval rostra arrived very opportunely to stay our impatience for a victory over the Dutch, which we have expected a good week from Lord Howe's hands—charming victories, if they facilitate peace! We have two negotiators actually at Paris; the principal, Mr. Thomas Grenville, whom you saw so lately. It will be one of fortune's caprices, if the son of the author of the Stamp Act and of the war is the mediator of peace.

[2] The battle took place on April 12, 1782, off Dominica. Six French ships were taken in the action, of which one blew up and one was sunk, and two others were taken by Hood on April 19 in the Mona passage (between San Domingo and Puerto Rico).

[3] Captain of the *Resolution* of 74 guns.

Lest we should be too exalted by these successes, we yesterday drank a cup of humiliation. Both Houses, in very few hours, signed the absolute independence of Ireland[4]. I shall not be surprised if our whole trinity is dissolved, and if Scotland should demand a dissolution of the Union. Strange if she alone does not profit of our distresses. It is very true she was grown more fond of availing herself of our prosperity.

There, there is a better cargo of news than I have sent you for some years!

I have received yours with the melancholy account of Lady William Campbell, and the enclosed for General Conway. I shall probably see him this evening, for I am confined by a little gout in my foot. I caught a violent cold last week, which turned to a fever and great oppression on my breast. Two bleedings carried off all entirely; but, as I expected, left me this gout in lieu. However, I know better how to manage an English mastiff that I am used to, than a tiger from Afric.

I am concerned for your loss of Patch[5]. He had great merit in my eyes in bringing to light the admirable paintings of Masaccio, so little known out of Florence till his prints disclosed them.

As our trophies arrived to-day, I was impatient to seize them for you, but the post set out last night, and will not depart again till Tuesday, by which time I may be able to send you another naval crown. I hate myself for being so like a sportsman, who is going out to hunt, and hopes to be able to make his friend a present of more game; but I doubt we must wade through more destruction to peace. What idiots are mankind to sacrifice themselves to the frantic

[4] On May 17 a bill was passed for the repeal of the Act asserting the legislative supremacy of England.

[5] An English painter settled at Florence. *Walpole.*

passions of a few! The slain only pass for rubbish of which the use is destroyed: who thinks on them? I do not quite love your Emperor, though he has demolished convents. I doubt he calculates that the more copulation is encouraged, the more soldiers he shall have.

21st.

Lord Howe's victory is not yet hatched; we reckon him in pursuit of the Dutch. The whole town was illuminated to Rodney's health on Saturday night. I was just gone to bed in pain, when a mob, the masters of our ceremonies, knocked outrageously at the door, and would scarce have patience till the servants could put out lights; and till three in the morning there was no sleeping for rockets and squibs. Lord Robert Manners lost one leg and had the other and one arm broken, yet lived three weeks in good spirits till the locked jaw came. How many others of whom one shall not hear, because they were not young Lords!

After dinner.

The Dutch fleet have escaped into the Texel, and Lord Howe is expected back into the Channel.

2311. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, May 24, 1782.

You are always kind to me, dear Sir, in all respects—but I have been forced to recur to a rougher prescription than ass's milk. The pain and oppression on my breast obliged me to be blooded two days together, which removed my cold and fever, but, as I foresaw, left me the gout in their room. I have had it in my left foot and hand for a week, but it is going. This cold is very epidemic; I have at least half a dozen nieces and great-nieces confined with it, but it is not dangerous nor lasting.

I shall send you within this day or two the new edition of my *Anecdotes of Painting.* You will find very little new. It is a cheap edition for the use of artists, and that at least they who really want the book, and not the curiosity, may have it, without being forced to give the outrageous price at which the Strawberry edition sells, merely because it is rare.

I could assure Mr. Gough that the letter on Chatterton cost me very small pains. I had nothing to do but recollect and relate the exact truth. There has been published another piece on it, which I cannot tell whether meant to praise or blame me, so wretchedly is it written: and I have received another anonymous one, dated Oxford (which may be to disguise Cambridge), and which professes to treat me very severely, though stuffed with fulsome compliments. It abuses me for speaking modestly of myself—a fault I hope I shall never mend; avows agreeing with me on the supposition of the poems, which may be a lie, for it is not uncharitable to conclude that an anonymous writer is a liar—acquits me of being at all accessory to the poor lad's catastrophe; and then, with most sensitive nerves is shocked to death, and finds me guilty of it, for having, after it happened, dropped, that had he lived he might have fallen into more serious forgeries, though I declare I never heard that he did. To be sure, no Irishman ever blundered more than to accuse one of an *ex post facto* murder! If this Hibernian casuist is smitten enough with his own miscarriage to preserve it in a magazine phial, I shall certainly not answer it, not even by this couplet, which is suggested:

> So fulsome, yet so captious too, to tell you much it grieves me,
> That though your flattery makes me sick, your peevishness relieves me.

Adieu, my good Sir.—Pray inquire for your books, if you do not receive them. They go by the Cambridge Fly.

Yours ever,

H. Walpole.

2312. To John Baynes.

Berkeley Square, May 24, 1782.

I am ashamed to trouble you with a letter to no purpose, Sir, but Mr. Mason having desired me to resolve a question in which you want information, I thought it would look like neglect if I was silent upon it. It seems you wish to know where is to be found a ballad by the Duke of Wharton, of which I have quoted two lines[1] in the *Royal and Noble Authors*. I am ashamed to say, Sir, that I cannot tell you, nor can recollect at this late period whether I transcribed them from any book, or retained them by memory. The latter is most probable, for though I was but an infant when the Duke left England, his exploits were so recent, and I heard so much about him in my childhood and youth, that when I wrote his article, his story was perfectly fresh in my memory. The case is very different now, and I cannot at all recollect whether I ever saw the ballad either in print or manuscript. It is possible that Mr. Nichols the printer can tell you where it is to be found, if in print. I wish I could give you any more sure direction, and am, Sir,

Your most obedient

Humble servant,

Hor. Walpole[2].

Letter 2312.—Not in C.; now first printed from original in possession of Maggs Bros.

[1] 'The Duke he drew out half his sword,
The Guard drew out the rest.'
The lines formed part of a ballad composed by the Duke after he had been arrested in St. James's Park for singing 'The King shall have his own again.'

[2] This letter is addressed:
To John Baines, Esq.,
in Coney Court, No. 11,
Gray's Inn.

2313. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, May 25, 1782.

My illness was indeed not an excuse left with the porter to avoid visits, but a very serious one, the consequences of which are not yet gone. I caught a violent cold, which fell on my breast and obliged me to be blooded two days together. In course the bleedings brought the gout, and here I am on my couch with both left hand and foot in flannel. I was at the worst when I wished to see Mr. Sherman, but I am content that he and you are so. My cold is an epidemic one; the Duchess[1] and all my nieces are laid up by it. Lady Chewton has been presented, but looked sadly, having been blooded the day before.

As I have the use of but one hand and am reduced very low, I can merely answer your paragraph. I did write a few lines last night to Mr. Baines, that *you* might lose no merit with him, but I could give him no satisfaction. I have utterly forgot every circumstance relative to that ballad. Probably, as I lived in that century, I retained the lines by memory, but whether I did or not I cannot tell now.

I have looked, but do not see your new Ode[2] advertised. I do not care what it is about, I dare to say I shall like it. My present object is to be amused, which few but you can compass. For politics, I am satisfied that the royalists are routed, and at least they must fight their way back before they can do more positive mischief. I cannot look forwards to what I may not see. I have loved old Lady England very disinterestedly till I am sixty-five. She has now got younger and abler gallants, and must beg she will dispense

Letter 2313.—[1] The Duchess of Gloucester.

[2] Mason's Ode to the Hon. William Pitt, published by Dodsley in June 1782.

with my troubling my head any more with her affairs. It is prudent for old folks to take the opportunity of any new era for breaking off instead of tapping every new generation one after another.

They say there is another packet of good news come this morning, and that Sir Samuel Hood has taken two or three more men-of-war. It is surely very pleasant that now one can dare to be glad of success! Three months ago a victory made one expect to be sent to the Bastile, still it is fortunate that Rodney and Hood cannot march their fleet to the door of the House of Commons. If they could——

After dinner.

The codicil to our victory is true. Hood has taken an eighty and seventy-four, two frigates and a store-ship, all chuck-full of cannon, masts, &c., destined to equip their fleet for the conquest of Jamaica. Rodney[3] is made an English and Hood an Irish peer, Drake[4] a Baronet, and Jervis[5] a Knight of the Bath; but all, I doubt, will not compensate the unlucky recall[6]! for you may be sure, if the individuals would be soothed, the faction will not.

2314. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, June 1, 1782.

I THANK you much, dear Sir, for your kind intention about Elizabeth of York, but it would be gluttony and

[3] Rodney was created Baron Rodney, of Rodney Stoke, in Somersetshire; Hood was created Baron Hood, of Catherington, in Ireland.

[4] Rear-Admiral Sir Francis Samuel Drake (d. 1789), first Baronet, commander of the van in Rodney's victory off Dominica.

[5] Captain John Jervis (1735–1823), afterwards G.C.B. and Earl St. Vincent. He was made K.B. in recognition of his services in Barrington's action of April 19, 1782.

[6] In consequence of his conduct at St. Eustatius Rodney had been recalled by the new ministry. They now saw that they had made a mistake, and endeavoured to compensate Rodney by the honours heaped on him—the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, a peerage, and a pension, while the committee of inquiry into affairs at St. Eustatius was discharged.

rapacity to accept her. I have her already in the picture of her marriage, that was Lady Pomfret's; besides Vertue's print of her, with her husband, son, and daughter-in-law. In truth, I have not room for any more pictures anywhere—yet, without plundering you, or without impoverishing myself, I have supernumerary pictures with which I can furnish your vacancies—but I must get well first to look them out—as yet I cannot walk alone, and my posture as you see makes me write ill. It is impossible to recover in such weather—never was such a sickly time.

I have not yet seen Bishop Newton's Life. I will not give three guineas for what I would not give three pence—his *Works*; his Life, I conclude, will be borrowed by all the magazines, and there I shall see it.

I know nothing of *Acciliator*—I have forgotten some of my good Latin, and happily never knew any bad; having always detested monkish barbarism. I have just finished Mr. Pennant's new volume[1], parts of which amused me; though I knew every syllable that was worth knowing before, for there is not a word of novelty; and it is tiresome his giving such long extracts out of Dugdale and other common books, and telling one long stories about all the most celebrated characters in the English history: besides panegyrics on all who showed him their houses—but the prints are charming; though I cannot conceive why he gave one of the Countess of Cumberland, who never did anything worth memory, but recording the very night on which she conceived.

The *Fair Circassian* was written by a Mr. Pratt[2], who has published several works under the name of Courtney Melmoth. The play might have been written by Cumberland, it is bad enough. I did read the latter's coxcombical

LETTER 2314.—[1] The *Journey from Chester to London.* [2] Samuel Jackson Pratt (1749-1814).

Anecdotes, but saw nothing on myself, except mention of my *Painters*. Pray what is the passage you mean, on me or Vertue? do not write on purpose to answer this, it is not worth while. I have just bought a most curious old picture; a portrait of one of whom I never saw a head. It is Robert Vere, Duke of Ireland, the great favourite of Richard II. It is evidently very ancient, being only part of a larger piece on board—behind the head is this remnant of an inscription, which being defective and thence unintelligible, shows it is not an imposition—I mean not a modern cheat, though perhaps not a genuine portrait. Here is what remains:

Robert		Robertus Verus
Dux	The syllables under which I	Dux Hiberniae
Dublin	have drawn a line are evidently	Dublinae Marchio
Oxon	more recent, and not on the	Oxoniae Comes
Baron	same piece of board. I imagine	Baro —
Rari	the part wanting might be as	
Bula	I have supplied it on the right	
Nebo	hand.	
ob. 1393		

But I can make nothing of the last three pieces of words, which might be parts of Irish baronies. Will you be so good as to look into Collins's house of Vere, or Dugdale, &c., for I have no books in town? Let this too be at your leisure, for I am in no hurry—except to hear that you are better. Adieu!

2315. To Earl Harcourt.

June 3rd.

I am much obliged, my dear Lord, for the sight of the Dictionary, as much as I understand. The two articles you pointed out are fine indeed! and how excellent to make the sublime one of *génie* end in a bitter epigram; it is giving the leviathan a sting that does more execution than his strength. All he says on operas is just, and yet I am so

English, such a modern Englishman, that I had rather *see* an opera than *hear* it. I am sorry for it, yet the longer one's ears are, and the more like *King* Midas's ears, the worse they hear.

Dr. Maty is very pert and foolish—I must confess it, for I cannot be grateful at the expense of my understanding. Bishop Newton is a greater fool, and as Lord Mansfield was his hero, or made himself so (for he had the MS. some time in his custody), I hope he inserted the panegyric himself. If he did not, he cannot be sick of the smell of paint, as I am.

Your Lordship's ever devoted, &c.

2316. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, June 4, 1782.

You are very kind, especially as my gout was not worth the inquiry, being only a codicil to the influenza. I have walked about the room to-day and shall air to-morrow.

I like the colouring of your Ode much, and do not dislike any part of it as you expected; you shall not be made a property of by any printer another time, as my press shall be at your command, unless for anything political. This is not from apprehension of *your* politics, but when I first set up the press, there was a notion that it was intended for that use; on which I vowed and declared it never should be employed either in politics or satire: and I kept so strictly to that resolution, that when I published my defence of General Conway I had it printed by Almon, though I avowed it.

The cheap edition of my *Anecdotes of Painting* is entirely my own direction, and calculated chiefly for the use of artists, in order to which I omitted the prints, to reduce the price. I had another view too, as there have been but few

copies of my editions, collectors (not readers) have pushed their price to an extravagant height. I cannot help their being such fools; but I determined that at least people should not give more for my writings than they are worth, unless they chose it.

I will read the imaginary Life of Mr. Mason[1], though I seldom do read the romances of the day.

You will be amazed when you hear what Lord Harcourt calls an obligation from me; that is, that he should think it so. You will not be surprised that when he does think so, his excellent heart should overflow. There are reasons why neither he nor I can write it.

We have at last acquired an ally! the *new* kingdom of Ireland have voted us an assistance of twenty thousand seamen. How will Bates or Macpherson continue to ascribe *this* to the late miscreants! They have voted Mr. Grattan[2] 10,000*l.* for a house, and 40,000*l.* more to purchase for him and his descendants an estate of 2,000*l.* a year.

Have you seen Bishop Newton's Life? I have only in a review. You may, perhaps, think it was drawn up by his washerwoman; but it is more probable *mangled* (*v.* the laundress's vocabulary: I do not mean *maimed*) by Lord Mansfield himself; at least he had the MS. for some weeks in his possession. It is a most perfect sample of episcopal and justiciary biography, &c.

Prelates will bow, and bless the harpy feast.

Stonhewer has been very ill of the influenza, and Palgrave a little, but we have had two dry days after fifty-three of rain, and begin to wear our rainbow again. Adieu.

LETTER 2316.—[1] In a book called *A Companion to the Theatre.*

[2] Henry Grattan (1746–1820), statesman and orator. The repeal of the Act of George I was largely due to his eloquence, and the grant was a reward for his 'eminent and unexampled services' to Ireland.

2317. To the Rev. William Mason.

June 6, 1782.

Postscript to my last.

The Archbishop of Canterbury being confined by the gout, the Cardinal of York[1] made the speech on the Birthday at the head of the Sacred College. He gloried in being admitted to that honour; he spoke with that truth which was their profession, and prayed for the head of the Church in their public and *secret* devotions. He condoled with his Majesty on many disagreeable things that he had been forced to undergo and must have felt, but he could take upon himself to assure him that he would not be deserted.

N.B. I wrote this down immediately, as it was repeated to me by one of the Bench who heard it. I asked whether my Lord of Canterbury had the gout in his head or stomach, for such a pound of incense looks as if he was dangerously ill. Bishop Hurd must double the dose to Mrs. Hagerdorn *in his secret devotions.*

2318. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, June 10, 1782.

Since the naval triumph in the West Indies, I have had no public event to send you, nor anything else but journals of the epidemic disorder, which has been so universal and so little fatal, that a dozen names would comprise all I know who have escaped it, or died of it. The strangest part of it is, that, though of very short duration, it has left a weakness or lassitude, of which people find it very difficult to recover. One has had nothing to do but send messages of inquiry after all one's acquaintance; and yet, no servants to

Letter 2317.—[1] Markham, Archbishop of York.

send on those messages. The theatres were shut up, the Birthday empty, and the ball at night a solitude. My codicil of gout confined me three weeks. I came hither to-day to air myself, though still very lame, and it is so cold that I am writing close to the fire. We are paying the fine of three sultry summers together. I was afraid we should have had too much *fire* too; but we have narrowly escaped a contested election at Westminster. Some of the late ministers set up the new Lord Hood in the room of the new Lord Rodney; and the new ministers, not very prudently, I think, named a Sir Cecil Wray[1], very unknown. Fortunately, Lord Hood's friends declared against his being a candidate.

I do not hear of the peace advancing. They say the King of France is *obstinate*; which, by courtiers, is always called *firm*. This is unusual: France commonly is the only nation that has sense enough not to persist on an ill run, but to leave off play, and wait for better luck. However, I have hopes yet. The change of administration, and the disposition of the new one to grant independence, must please the Americans; and as France, by the demolition of De Grasse's fleet, can send no reinforcements to America, the latter must see that this is the moment to shake off dependence on France as well as on England. The contribution, too, of 20,000 seamen from Ireland must be sorely felt by our enemies.

The old ministers have begun to revive a little, but have had no cause from success to be proud of their bickerings. Lord North, Lord Loughborough, and Lord Hillsborough have been most severely handled for their flippancies by Charles Fox, the Duke of Richmond, and Lord Shelburne;

LETTER 2318.—[1] Tenth Baronet; d. 1805. He had large estates in Lincolnshire, Norfolk, and Yorkshire, and had previously (1768–80) sat for East Retford.

and all the new measures have been carried far more triumphantly than was expected. Still, I do not doubt but whatever impediments can be thrown in their way, will be: but I am no dealer in futurities.

We expect Mrs. Damer every hour. Mr. Conway and Lady Aylesbury have told me how infinitely sensible they are of your attentions and goodness to Lady William.

I have not heard a syllable from Lucas. Mr. Morrice has written a very harsh letter to him on his delay and past negligence. I advised him to add, that even Sharpe had complained of him; as he has—I thought it good to throw a bone of contention between them, as I doubt they are but too much in league. I heard the other day indirectly that Lucas told one of my Lord's creditors that they expected to get five or six thousand pounds from Mozzi—I can say nothing to that yet, as I have not seen their demands—but from Lucas's rough account last year, I did not think it was what they would obtain—but they have not wasted all this time for nothing! Mr. Morrice has told Lucas that he has advised Cav. Mozzi to sell his rights—and perhaps he had better have taken that advice. It does not become me to say more; but I own the behaviour of both Lucas and Sharpe give me strong suspicions!

I shall not go to town till Wednesday, and therefore shall not finish this till Friday, by which time I may have more to say.

Thursday, 13th, London.

I found a note from Mr. Morrice to tell me that Lucas had sent him word he must see Lord Orford (and was going to him in the country) before he could send the papers. I do not know what this implies—but I should be sorry to be able to guess what such people mean.

There are letters from France which say that their losses in the West Indies are greater than we know yet. I hate

to be hoping that any misfortunes are true; but, fortunately, one's wishes do not add a hair to the scale, except one is a stock-jobber. Such gentry coin disasters, to cheat somebody by sinking the funds without cause. If gospels mended mankind, there should have been a new sermon preached on the Mount, since 'Change Alley was built, and since money-changers were driven out of the Temple over all Europe.

Friday, 14th.

Mrs. Damer arrived last night. She looks in better health than when she went, but I cannot say, at all plumper. She said, 'Pray, tell Sir Horace how much obliged to him I am; and, do you know,' she added, 'that he is not only one of the most amiable men in the world, but the most agreeable?' I see that you understood her as well as she does you, for you have given her an antique foot that is the perfection of sculpture. I have not time to add a word more, but that she told me that at Paris the universal language is, that the late change in the English ministry *est bien malheureux pour la France.*

2319. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, June 13, 1782.

Though it was being ungrateful for your kind note, Madam, I could not bring myself to write when I had nothing to tell you but about myself. What can be said of a lame old creature but that he is still alive? I have been for two days at Strawberry to sleep in the air, which was literally all I could do, for it rained every minute, and, unless I had a pair of Mrs. Noah's clogs, I could not have set my foot out of the ark. I found every mortal at Twickenham as ill as they have been in town. Both Lady Di's daughters were in bed, Lady Browne very bad, and Mrs. Clive, I think, in

a still worse way. Then it was so cold, I had no inclination to stay. Of my spring delights, lilacs, apple-trees in bloom, and nightingales, the two last are over and the first going. My orange-trees still keep their beds; and for roses, there was not even a white one on the 10th of June (except in the conservatory at Kane Wood[1]), though they used to blow as religiously on that day as the Glastonbury thorn. In short, the season seems to sympathize with my decay, as poets say it does with them when their Phillis is absent. I don't believe you found Ampthill very sultry, Madam; you had better return to town like me, and put an erratum at the end of your almanac, *for June read January.* Summer was made to be felt and enjoyed, not to be taken for better for worse like a spouse, in whom one has no pleasure any longer.

I found nothing new in town but a marriage or two, as many deaths, a house-breaking, and a murder—if they are novelties. Lord Lewisham[2] marries his cousin Lady Frances Finch, Lord Aylesford's sister. Lady Grandison is dead at Spa; her body arrived before her death was known; her steward received a letter from Margate from her maid, to say they had got in there with her lady after a disagreeable passage: he went to look for a house for her, and an hour after learnt that it was the corpse. Sir Thomas Frankland's house was broken open last night in Bond Street, close to St. James's Street, though his wife and servants were in town; and as Lady Chewton and her sisters came from the Opera, they saw two officers fighting in Pall Mall, next to Dr. Graham's, and the mob trying to part them. Lord Chewton and some other young men went into the house,

Letter 2319.—[1] Caen Wood, Lord Mansfield's house at Highgate; a fling at his supposed Jacobite sympathies.

[2] George Legge (1755–1810), Viscount Lewisham, eldest son of second Earl of Dartmouth, whom he succeeded in 1801; m. (Sept. 24, 1782) Lady Frances Finch (d. 1838), second daughter of third Earl of Aylesford.

and found a Captain Lucas of the Guards bleeding on a couch. It was a quarrel about an E. O.[3] table, I don't know what. This officer had been struck in the face with a red-hot poker by a drawer, and this morning is dead. So are hundreds of peach and apricot trees of the influenza; but methinks I am writing a letter like the casualties at the end of a reign in Baker's Chronicle. He would have interpreted them into judgements and portents; now they are only common occurrences, and will be forgotten to-morrow, without disturbing civilized society. Religious times breathe a browner horror on everything; philosophers write folios against immoral times; but, when a nation is perfectly well bred and indifferent, no enormities shock anybody; and, when they have made an article in the newspaper, are mentioned no more than the clothes at the last Birthday. I should not have ventured to tell you half my paragraphs, Madam, if you were not a country body of a week's standing.

2320. To John Nichols.

Sir, Berkeley Square, June 19, 1782.

Just this moment, on opening your fifth volume of *Miscellaneous Poems*, I find the translation of Cato's speech into Latin, attributed (by common fame) to Bishop Atterbury. I can most positively assure you, that that translation was the work of Dr. Henry Bland, afterwards Head Master of Eton School, Provost of the College there, and Dean of Durham. I have more than once heard my father Sir Robert Walpole say, that it was he himself who gave that translation to Mr. Addison, who was extremely surprised at the fidelity and beauty of it. It may be worth while, Sir,

[3] i. e. even and odd, a game of chance said to have been invented by Beau Nash. It had lately become popular with all classes, as it was supposed to be beyond the reach of the laws against games of chance.

on some future occasion, to mention this fact in some one of your valuable and curious publications. I am, Sir, with great regard,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2321. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, June 21, 1782.

IT is no trouble, my good Sir, to write to you; for I am as well recovered as I generally do. I am very sorry you do not, and especially in your hands, as your pleasure and comforts so much depends on them. Age is by no means a burden while it does not subject one to depend on others—when it does, it reconciles one to quitting everything—at least I believe you and I think so, who do not look on solitude as a calamity.

I shall go to Strawberry Hill to-morrow, and will, as I might have thought of doing, consult Dugdale and Collins for the Duke of Ireland's inferior titles. Mr. Gough I shall be glad of seeing when I am settled there, which will not be this fortnight.

I think there are but eleven parts of *Marianne*, and that it breaks off in the Nun's story, which promised to be very interesting. Marivaux never finished *Marianne*, nor the *Paysan parvenu* (which was the case too of the younger Crébillon with *Les Égaremens*). I have seen two bad conclusions of *Marianne* by other hands. Elizabeth of York I beg you will keep, I really have not a place for it—but I shall send you by Monday's Fly four very indifferent pictures, which will not deserve the smallest thanks: I shall be content if one of them will serve to fill your vacancy, and if the others will be of any use to you. If they are not, I assure you they are not worth returning, though I bought them all at Mr. Sheldon's in lots, with

other articles. One is a portrait of Selden; the three others are an altar-piece and doors with arms, which by the flourishing sort of mantle round them, seem to be Flemish or Dutch.

Mr. Cumberland's *brusquerie* is not worth notice, nor did I remember it. Mr. Pennant's impetuosity you must overlook too, though I love your delicacy about your friend's memory. Nobody that knows you will suspect you of wanting it—but, in the ocean of books that overflows every day, who will recollect a thousandth part of what is in most of them? By the number of writers one should naturally suppose there were multitudes of readers; but if there are, which I doubt, the latter read only the productions of the day. Indeed, if they did read former publications, they would have no occasion to read the modern, which, like Mr. Pennant's, are borrowed wholesale from the more ancient—it is sad to say that the borrowers add little new but mistakes. I have just been turning over Mr. Nichols's eight volumes of *Select Poems*, which he has swelled unreasonably with large collops of old authors, most of whom little deserved revivifying. I bought them for the biographic notes, in which I have found both inaccuracies and blunders. For instance, one that made me laugh; in Lord Lansdown's *Beauties* he celebrates a lady, one Mrs. Vaughan[1]. Mr. Nichols turns to the peerage of that time, and finds that a Duke of Bolton married a Lady Anne Vaughan; he instantly sets her down for the lady in question, and introduces her to posterity as a beauty. Unluckily she was a monster—so ugly, that the Duke, then Marquis of Winchester, being forced by his father to marry her for her great fortune, was believed never to have consummated, and parted from her

LETTER 2321.—[1] Daughter of third Earl of Carbery of the Vaughan family. She was married to the third Duke of Bolton in 1713, and died in 1751.

as soon as his father died—but, if our predecessors are exposed to these misrepresentations, what shall we be, when not only all private history is detailed in our newspapers, but scarce ever with tolerable fidelity! I have long said, that if a paragraph in a newspaper contains a word of truth, it is sure to be accompanied with two or three blunders—yet, who will believe that papers published in the face of the whole town should be nothing but magazines of lies, every one of which fifty persons could contradict and disprove? Yet so it certainly is, and future history will probably be ten times falser than all preceding. Adieu!

Yours most sincerely,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2322. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

THE weather, I confess, did change, Madam, as suddenly and unexpectedly as the administration, and both probably for a short time. His majesty, the sun, who had not shone a good while, came out in a very warm mood, and everybody was impatient to kiss his hand; but in three days his chancellor, the east wind, turned those halcyon days to a storm, and I look upon the bloom of summer as gone. I have been twice at Strawberry, but shall not settle there till next week, when my court removes over sea and leaves me at liberty, which I shall enjoy as much as the Duke of Manchester or Lord Ludlow[1] do a Drawing-room. My nephew, Lord Cholmondeley, you know, Madam, is going to Berlin: he refused Russia, which I should have thought he would have preferred, as he is more formed to succeed with a gallant Empress than with a peevish old politician, and could carry better credentials. They say the Prussian King is at last well disposed to us and huffs the Dutch

LETTER 2322.—[1] Peter Ludlow (1730–1803), first Earl Ludlow.

à notre intention. If, after all, we do not sink, English vanity will conclude more than ever that Providence dotes upon us, and never will let us be ruined, let us play the fool as much as we will. I have a better opinion of Providence, and, unless it originally bestowed good luck on fools as a balance and compensation, I do not believe that it employs itself in remedying blunders. My countrymen, with their leave, are exceedingly contemptible. They have, for these seven years, been applauding and encouraging the court to persist in all its frenzy and obstinacy, and now it rains addresses of thanks to his Majesty for changing his administration; though they have no reason to thank him or themselves for the change.

Strawberry Hill, June 28.

I had begun this letter a week ago here, in answer to your Ladyship's last, was interrupted, and left it here in my table drawer; yet though it is superannuated, it will be as new as anything I could tell you. Besides, Lord Ossory has been in town, and carried you all the novelties of the week, if there were any. Lord Rockingham was said to be better yesterday, but that is a very ancient date in the health of a First Minister. What would Lord Shelburne think of my want of curiosity, who came out of town this morning without inquiring? I am to dine to-morrow with Princess Amelie at Gunnersbury, must return on Sunday for the last Drawing-room at Gloucester House; and on Thursday shall be sovereign of myself again, which is much more important to me than who is to be First Lord of the Treasury, if the Marquis is carried off in his second dictatorship. Three hours ago I saw just the reverse of what is passing in Lord Rockingham's ante-chamber. It was Lady North, her three daughters, and one of her sons, taking a solitary promenade on the river, and landing to stroll on the shore, without a single Rosencrantz or Guildenstern attending. Forty years

ago[2] I myself was one of the *dramatis personae* in such a scene; and as even then I was perfectly indifferent to the change of decorations, it is not surprising that I should look on them now with much composure; but it was constitution, not philosophy: philosophy is only a command of muscles. I never could command mine, when I really cared; and should have made a miserable politician had I ever felt a sensation of ambition.

I believe there is some apprehension of a visit in the Channel from the united squadrons. I heard a good deal about them t'other night, and dreamt the French had landed at *Torbay*[3], which I loved myself for, as it showed what a preference there is at my heart to *Torbay*. At least, I am sure that I had paid little attention to the idea of an invasion, but a great deal to a *modicum* of King William's coat, taken out of his wound after the battle of the Boyne, and set in a crystal locket, which Mrs. Walsingham showed me a week ago, and which probably gave the colour to my dream.

The Bishop of Salisbury[4] is dead; I conclude Bishop Shipley will succeed him, nor can have above one competitor, Bishop Hinchliffe, unless your *beaufrère*[5] is immediately Premier, and names the Chancellor's brother. I suppose to-night I shall dream of Bishop Hoadley; for you see, Madam, I am an old Whig even in my sleep, and that the powers of darkness cannot affect my principles.

2323. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, June 25, 1782.

I find there is a correspondence commenced between you and Mr. Hayley by the Parnassus post[1]. I did not know

[2] Walpole refers to his father's fall from power in 1742.

[3] The landing-place of King William III.

[4] Dr. John Hume.

[5] The Earl of Shelburne, husband of Lord Ossory's sister.

Letter 2323.—[1] Hayley had pub-

you were acquainted; I suppose you met at Calliope's: if you love incense, he has fumigated you like a flitch of bacon. However, I hope in the Lord Phœbus that you will not take his advice any more than Pope did that of such another sing-song warbler, Lord Lyttelton; nor be persuaded to write an epic poem (that most senseless of all the species of poetic composition, and which pedants call the *chef-d'œuvre* of the human mind); well, you may frown, as in duty bound, yet I shall say what I list.

Epic poetry is the art of being as long as possible in telling an uninteresting story; and an epic poem is a mixture of history without truth, and of romance without imagination. We are well off when from that *mésalliance* there spring some bastards called episodes, that are lucky enough to resemble their romantic mother, more than their solemn father. So far from epic poetry being at the head of composition, I am persuaded that the reason why so exceedingly few have succeeded is from the absurdity of the species. When nothing has been impossible to genius in every other walk, why has everybody failed in this but the inventor, Homer? You will stare, but what are the rest? Virgil, with every beauty of expression and harmony that can be conceived, has accomplished but an insipid imitation. His hero is a nullity, like Mellefont[2] and the virtuous characters of every comedy, and some of his incidents, as the harpies and the ships turned to nymphs, as silly as Mother Goose's Tales. Milton, all imagination, and a thousand times more sublime and spirited, has produced a monster. Lucan, who often says more in half a line than Virgil in a whole book, was lost in bombast if he talked for thirty lines together. Claudian and Statius had all his fustian with none of his quintessence. Camoens had more true grandeur than they,

lished *An Essay on Epic Poetry, in Five Epistles, to the Rev. Mr. Mason.*

[2] A character in Congreve's *Double Dealer.*

but with grosser faults. Dante was extravagant, absurd, disgusting, in short, a Methodist parson in Bedlam. Ariosto was a more agreeable Amadis de Gaul in a bawdy-house, and Spenser, John Bunyan in rhyme. Tasso wearies one with their insuperable crime of stanza and by a thousand puerilities that are the very opposite of that dull dignity which is demanded for epic: and Voltaire, who retained his good sense in heroics, lost his spirit and fire in them. In short, epic poetry is like what it first celebrated, the heroes of a world that knew nothing better than courage and conquest. It is not suited to an improved and polished state of things. It has continued to degenerate from the founder of the family, and happily expired in the last bastard of the race, Ossian.

Still, as Mr. Hayley has allowed such a latitude to heroic poesy as to admit the *Lutrin*, *The Dispensary*, and *The Dunciad* as epic poems, I can forgive a man who recommends to a friend to pen a tragedy when he will accept of *The Way of the World* as one.

For Mr. Hayley himself, though he chants in good tune, and has now and then pretty lines amongst several both prosaic and obscure, he has, I think, no genius, no fire, and not a grain of *originality*, the first of merits (in my eyes) in these latter ages, and a more certain mark of genius than in the infancy of the world, when no ground was broken, nor even, in the sportsman's phrase, *foiled*. It is that originality that I admire in your *Heroic Epistle* and in your genuine style, which, I trust, you will not quit to satisfy the impartial Mr. Hayley (who, though a good patriot, equally cherishes janizaries)

> That to you *do not belong*
> *The beauties of envenomed song.*

For writing an epic poem, it would be as wise to set about copying Noah's ark, if Mons. de Buffon should beg you to

build a menagerie for a couple of every living creatures upon earth, when there is no longer any danger of a general inundation.

I doubt your new friend will write his readers and his own reputation to death; every poem has a train of prose as long as Cheapside, with a vast parade of reading that would be less dear if it had any novelty or vivacity to recommend it. I know as little new as he, except that Lord Rockingham is very ill. I believe not without danger; should he fall, there would be a new scene indeed! Adieu!

P.S. I find I have said above, every living *creatures*: is not that bad English? and if it is, is not it better—than *a couple of every living creature*?

2324. To John Nichols.

June 30, 1782.

Mr. Walpole is much obliged to Mr. Nichols for the prints, and will beg another of Mr. Bowyer for his collection of heads, as he shall put the one he has received to Mr. Bowyer's Life.

Mr. W. has no objection to being named for the anecdote of Dr. Bland's translation, as it is right to authenticate it—but the other corrections are too trifling to require authority.

In p. 190 of the *Royal Wills* are two errors. Richard de Coningsburgh was only Earl of Cambridge and never Duke of York: but he was father of *Richard* Duke of York slain at Wakefield, whose son *Edward* was Edward IV.

Letter 2324.—Not in C.; printed from original in possession of Mr. W. V. Daniell.

2325. To Earl Harcourt.

Berkeley Square, July 1, 1782.

I wish, my dear Lord, I had told you how very much I admire Lady Harcourt! I am sure you would have left her at my house. I did but mention the head of Addison—and I found it on my table. I must have Aladdin's lanthorn without knowing it, and you are certainly one of the genies subservient to it, that obey in a twinkling whatever—but, no,—for once, Mr. Genie, you are mistaken. I not only did not order you to send Addison, but you must transport it back, or I will. It is very hard if one cannot make a visit to a gentleman, and ask whose that picture is, but one must have an officious lanthorn at one's tail, like Io, Mio, and Rio, that fancies one longs, and that one's next child will be marked with what one longed for, if one has not it that instant. Good genie, take notice, I am not breeding, nor do I wish for everything I see. You have filled my house and every cranny of it already, and it will hold nothing more. Do you think because I am old that I covet more and more, and that I am as rapacious as you are bountiful and magnificent?

Seriously, my dear Lord, you shall allow me next winter to return you the Addison. I truly have no room for it: you have a collection of English poets—I have not; and over and above all these reasons, pray believe that I am as interested in Nuneham as in Strawberry, and have as much pleasure in its being ornamented. I have little time left to enjoy anything, and who knows what will become of Strawberry, and how soon it may be put up to auction? I am infinitely sensible of all your goodness to me, and much prouder of it than of a collection. Were it the Tribune of Florence I cannot pay a thousandth part of my debts to you,

nor, much as I would, my attachment and respect to your Lordship and Lady Harcourt; and when you heap new favours on me, you add to my distress. I meant to quarrel with you ironically, but my heart overflowed: gratitude is a simple awkward creature that cannot disguise its feelings; and though it has the shortest memory of all the virtues, it cannot help saying what it thinks, when taken by surprise. This time my gratitude shall be perfectly pure, for though it shall restore your present, it shall never forget it.

I came to town yesterday for *our* last Drawing-room; but heard nothing new. The suspense about Lord Rockingham continues. Dr. Warren thought him likely to recover on Saturday, but the night was bad. The message to-day is, that his days are good, but the nights bad. By what I can collect, his friends, if Lord Rockingham fails, are little disposed to submit to the probable successor. I shall take the liberty of writing, should the event happen; you know I have little connection, but my accounts may be a little more authentic than the newspapers. I must finish abruptly, for, my dear Lord, you have made it impossible for words to tell you how much I am, &c.

Four o'clock.

I wrote this but two hours ago. Lord Cholmondeley has this moment been here, and told me that Lord Rockingham died three hours ago: your Lordship shall hear again the moment I know anything that can be depended upon.

2326. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, July 1, 1782.

I can tell you but one word, but that is a momentous one. Lord Rockingham died at one o'clock at noon to-day. It is concluded that Lord Shelburne will succeed him and the

American war revive, and many of its authors, you may be sure of all, if *Starvation*[1] is sent for from Edinburgh.

I did not expect the new administration to be long-lived, but it was not of a natural death that I thought it would die.

2327. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, July 1, 1782.

Undoubtedly you will have as early intelligence as I can send you, Madam, of to-day's great event: Lord Rockingham died at one o'clock at noon. Unless I could tell you what is to be, it would be idle to add more, or to talk of any other subject than what this event will produce; and as I have neither the honour of being a prophet, nor am of the drawer of any Cabinet, I will not pretend to say what will be, nor (like a thousand others who know no more than I, and who will not be more consulted) what should be, though I am perfectly clear what ought to be; but as the crown is lapsed to King George again, and as he may not happen to be of my opinion, I shall keep it to myself, and be ready, like the Vicar of Bray, to admire the choice, whatever it shall be.

They say there has not a *howd'ye* as big as a silver penny been sent from Windsor, nor any inquiry made; and yet I should think there was care taken to have minute intelligence. I can give you some very good of the negative kind, Madam. Though there is a mitre vacant, and it is now six o'clock, I have not seen a divine knocking at a pair of gates in this square, nor are any marrowbones and cleavers yet arrived.

It will be a singular year if the next six months produce as strange events as these six have; a total change, the caterpillars, the influenza, and the death of a Prime Minister. Apropos, I was forced last Saturday to have two bird-cherries

Letter 2326.—[1] Henry Dundas.

at Strawberry Hill cut down and burnt; they were totally covered with webs, like a sheet full of well-grown caterpillars —as I have prodigious faith in nature's prognostics, I am persuaded that we are not yet secure against an inundation of Scotch ministers. I picked up a caterpillar myself that had as many colours as a plaid. You that have no superstition, Madam, may laugh at me for telling you of my dreams and omens—to be sure, I did not use to be so credulous; but remember,

> The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
> Lets in new light through chinks which time has made[1].

I have so many of those inlets, that no wonder my faith increases; but adieu, Madam, I will go and hear what the world says.

P.S. Oh, I have got a new omen, that tells me Lord Shelburne will be minister—Premiers always live where I do. In Arlington Street, my father, Lord Granville, Mr. Pelham, the Duke of Grafton. It is odd that their star and mine should *domicilier* together; but the nearer the church——

2328. To Sir Horace Mann.

Monday night, July 1, 1782.

This is to announce an important event which you could not expect. Lord Rockingham died at one o'clock at noon to-day. You will want to ask one, and many other questions, which nobody in London can answer yet. Who is to be First Minister? Will the new administration continue?—Stay,—till I can tell you the first, it is in vain to proceed in your interrogatories—I may as well go back for a few days. This letter will not depart till to-morrow night. Whether I shall be able to tell you more by that time, can I guess?

Letter 2327.—[1] Waller, *Verses on his Divine Poesy.*

This death was not a sudden one. The Marquis has been ill above a week, and in danger for some days. At first, Dr. Warren thought it water in his stomach, then changed his opinion. Sir Noah Thomas doubted whether it was water. It signifies little now what it was. He was always of a very bad constitution. I remember an elder brother of his at Eton, who was subject to violent convulsions, and died of them. Lord Rockingham was extremely splenetic about his health (the consequence of bad), and some years ago wanted to have his side opened, believing he had an abscess there. Six weeks ago, I heard that Dr. Warren told him he could not live if he continued in business.

Well! no man ever before attained twice the great object of his wishes, and enjoyed it both times for so short a season: the first time but a year—now, not four months. The death of the late Duke of Devonshire, and the want of a leader, set Lord Rockingham at the head of the Whigs, from his rank, great fortune, and fair character. Those were his pretensions and merit. His parts were by no means great: he was nervous, and mere necessity alone made him at all a speaker in Parliament; where, though he spoke good sense, neither flattery nor partiality could admire or applaud. He was rather trifling and dilatory in business than indolent. Virtues and amiability he must have possessed; for his party esteemed him highly, and his friends loved him with unalterable attachment. In the excess of faction that we have seen, he was never abused; and no man in public life, I believe, had ever fewer enemies. His death may be more remembered than his actions would have been, and may have greater consequences than any plan of *his* would have had; for he countenanced a system rather than instigated it. Whoever is his successor will not be of so negative a character.

This is the second Prime Minister I have seen die in

office. I do not believe the current will glide on as smoothly as it did on Mr. Pelham's death ; but that moment was very different from this ! I could make divers reflections on all I have seen and known in a long life—but I will not. I will rather fill the bottom of this page with a few words on poor Mozzi.

You bid me in your last not forget him, *my* last showed I did not. Sharpe sent me last week a complaining letter from him without a tittle of his own—but he wrote to Mr. Morrice to say that he and I might call on Lucas for the papers. I replied to Mr. Morrice that *he* might—but could I ? I am referee to my Lord—can I complain of the delays of his lawyers ? Would it not imply partiality *against* the person who entrusts me ? Does not Sharpe seem to try to shift his own treachery on me ? I do disapprove the conduct of my Lord and his lawyers ; I have told them so—but I must act justly by them—and indeed I question whether Mr. Morrice will be capable of acting : again he cannot write, and I hear thinks of returning to Naples. Cav. Mozzi was much in the wrong not to take my advice and come over. You may tell him all I say.

Adieu till to-morrow—not that I expect to be able to tell you more of the administration then. If you do not hear again by Friday's post, you will conclude that nothing is settled. You have known longer interministeriums.

Tuesday, after dinner.

The evening comes on, and I must go out, without being able to tell you more than I wrote last night. Because they do not know, the town has guessed many successors—as Lord Shelburne, the Dukes of Richmond, Portland, and Devonshire, and Lord Gower. The first and last may be candidates : I believe none of the Dukes are. From my late letters you may perceive that there might be still

a sixth person[1] in question, but who certainly will not be,—I mean, not successor: but you must have patience; and it is better not to be surprised, whatever you shall hear. I shall be much surprised if nothing happens to surprise you. Adieu!

2329. To Earl Harcourt.

July 5, 1782.

I wish, my dear Lord, that I had not promised to send you further accounts, as I can tell you nothing that is agreeable. At present, though the humours are come to a *head*, they break faster than they gather. To speak intelligibly, the death of Lord Rockingham, whom I cannot admire more than I did, on the mere merit of being dead, has already produced great dissension. What has happened, I can tell you; that is, what had happened before last night. I begin this letter at noon, not answering for anything that may have passed this morning. Lord Shelburne is named—I do not say, appointed to the Treasury. Charles Fox and Lord John Cavendish have resigned. The Duke of Richmond, General Conway, T. Townshend[1], the Duke of Manchester[2], Lord Effingham, are for going on; Lord Keppel will stay a little while; of others I know only flying reports. Mr. William Pitt is to be Secretary of State, or Chancellor of the Exchequer[3], but these are individuals—what is to become of England? what of the peace with America? what of the favourable dispositions there may be in Europe? Here are the Whigs divided almost as soon as triumphant!—What a moment gave a moment has destroyed!

Letter 2328.—[1] Lord Chancellor Thurlow. *Walpole.*

Letter 2329.—[1] Secretary at War; he became Home Secretary in Lord Shelburne's ministry.

[2] Lord Chamberlain.

[3] He became Chancellor of the Exchequer.

2 o'clock.

I was interrupted by several persons calling in. The report is, that Burke resigns, and it is concluded the Duke of Portland will[4]. Mr. Pitt has returned his briefs to his clients, and within this hour, the first battle will be fought in the House of Commons between him and Mr. Fox, the former declaring loudly against the factious resignation of the latter. This is Mr. Pitt's language, not mine; the motives of both are the same. The Duke of Richmond and Mr. Conway have laboured to prevent disunion in the administration, and implored harmony at least till pacification with America should be accomplished—but in vain! In short, on every side there is nothing to comfort, a vast deal to lament. Mr. Stonhewer and I have been sighing together. Is Mr. Mason at Nuneham? I wrote a line to him on Monday, which probably has not reached him; when it does, he will know what I chiefly lament, yet I did not foresee all that I do now.

I can tell your Lordship nothing you will be glad to hear, but that the parting of two persons you love was much better than I expected.

6 o'clock.

I have just received a letter from Mr. Mason of the 2nd, and find that he will not be with your Lordship before to-morrow at soonest.

The Prince of Wales dined with Mr. Fox yesterday by previous engagement; they drank royally. Charles went thence to Brooks's, stayed till four in the morning, and it being so early, finished the evening at White's with Lord Weymouth,—'and the evening and the morning and the next day were the first day.' Amen, and so be it!

[4] Burke (Paymaster of the Forces) and the Duke of Portland (Viceroy of Ireland) both resigned.

2330. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Sunday evening, July 7, 1782.

You will not be surprised, my dear Madam, that either I do not write or do not know what to write. What I think and feel, I can best tell you by what I said to Mr. Fitzpatrick last night. I met him in the passage of the playhouse; he said, 'I fear you do not approve us[1].' I replied. 'I feel concern so much more than disapprobation, that I call it only concern.' He said, 'It was coming fast to this point *before* Lord Rockingham's death;' 'Yes,' I answered, 'but I wish it had not come to this point these three months!' These sentiments might be rolled out into a long commentary, but they contain the pith.

I have no hesitation in saying that I think Mr. Fox the fittest man in England for Prime Minister; I say it aloud and everywhere. But there are points in question at this moment far more important than who shall be Premier. The pacification of America and the negotiations on the anvil are of dearer moment; and ought not, cannot wait, for domestic contests. Every man, too, has his own feelings. I have been called a republican; I never was quite that, as no man ever was quite of any of the denominations laid down in books. But, if never a republican quite, I never approached in thought, wish, inclination, or reasoning, towards being a partisan of an aristocracy. What! not be a republican, and yet approve a republic of tyrants! I never admired Lord Rockingham: shall his self-elected executors tell me that I am to take the oaths to Lord Fitzwilliam; I who was a non-juror in the

Letter 2330.—[1] Fitzpatrick, who had been Chief Secretary for Ireland, followed the example of his intimate friend Fox in resigning on Rockingham's death.

uncle's time! I see a very good reason why Mr. Fox should say that that imaginary King never dies; but, as I told him t'other night, my Whiggism is founded on the constitution, not on two or three great families, who are forced to have virtue for a claim to their dignity, and any able man they can find to execute the office for them. My Whiggism is not confined to the Peak of Derbyshire[2].

In my tiny sphere I have been labouring to prevent disunion; to very little purpose truly. Mr. Fox has suffered me, with his usual and unalterable good humour, to talk to him very freely; not on the general rupture, for I am neither vain enough nor foolish enough to suppose that I can persuade him by *my* arguments out of his own; nor do I talk to a politician on his duty to his country, because a master genius feels something in himself which inferior mortals cannot feel, and which tells him that whatever hurt he does he can repair the moment he is possessed of full power; but my point has been, and shall be, to endeavour to preserve good terms between him and his uncle Duke[3]. Even in that I may fail at present, but they are both too good-natured not to forgive on the first opportunity.

There is a world more of topics for talk, but the tide is too rapid at present, not to hurry the present moment away, and supply its place before the post can arrive. I have sketched my thoughts, as it would look like want of confidence or political mystery if I were silent. I am apt to be too frank, and thank my stars I have no secrets to conceal. I like and dislike, and say so, and readily avow my purposes. I long to get to Strawberry, where I shall have no purposes at all. When this vision of a Whig

[2] i. e. the Cavendishes. In the *Last Journals* (vol. ii. p. 545) Lord John Cavendish is credited with the conviction that 'the house of Cavendish ought to have the exclusive right of naming a Prime Minister.'

[3] The Duke of Richmond, who disapproved of Fox's resignation.

administration, so unlikely ever to be realized, had acquired substance—not then likely to last, has vanished so instantaneously, what a dotard should I be, if again I looked forward! Adieu! Madam; I do not believe you enjoy the crisis more than I do; but I beg you not to suppose that I desire an answer. It cannot be pleasant to you to talk on points that touch you more nearly; but I am a creature *isolé*, and what I think or say is of no consequence.

2331. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, July 7, 1782.

I do not pretend to be a prophet; at least, I confess that I am one of that wary sort, who take care to be very sure of what will happen before they venture to foretell. I ordered you to expect to be surprised—no very wise way of surprising! In truth, I did foresee that Lord Rockingham's death would produce a very new scene; and so it has: but is it possible to give an account of what is only beginning? The few real facts that have actually happened are all that one can relate with certainty. They will open wide fields of conjectures to you, and, at your distance, probably not very just ones; nor, as I affect no sagacity, shall I offer you a clue that may lead you as much out of the way.

Lord Rockingham died on Monday. On Tuesday it was known amongst the ministers that Lord Shelburne was to succeed. This was not unforeseen; but did not please those the better who were disposed to dislike it. Lord John Cavendish, who had most unwillingly been dragged into the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, declared nothing should make him retain it under any other man than his late friend, for whose sake he had undertaken it. Mr. Fox more directly protested against Lord Shelburne. The Duke of Richmond and General Conway endeavoured to prevent

disunion in the new system, and on Wednesday night did not despair; but on Thursday, at court, Mr. Fox arrived, took Lord Shelburne aside, asked him abruptly if he was to be First Lord of the Treasury; and, being answered in the affirmative, said, 'Then, my Lord, I shall resign'—went into the closet, and left the seals, which he had brought in his pocket, with the King.

The schism begun, has gone farther. Everybody knew that the Rockingham and Shelburne squadrons, who had never been cordial even in opposition, had with great difficulty been brought to coalesce in the formation of the administration, and some knew that their conjunction had not proceeded with much amity. In the first moment it was still hoped by moderate men that the breach—I mean the present—would not go far; as many disapprove Mr. Fox's precipitation. But he and Lord John had not taken their part with indifference. A meeting of the late Marquis's friends was held yesterday at Lord Fitzwilliam's—the nephew or Octavius of the late Cæsar, but no more likely to be an Augustus, than the Marquis was a Julius. After a debate of six hours the whole junto, except the Duke of Richmond, resolved to secede; but, by *whole junto*, you must not understand all who had been adherents to Lord Rockingham. Some who had been would not attend this novel institution of hereditary right, nor understand why the government is to be permanent in two or three great families, like the Hebrew priesthood in one tribe; General Conway, you may be sure, was not of that assembly. He never would attach himself to either or any faction; and, though they may change their note, the dissidents themselves yet allow that they have no claim to his allegiance, and that he always acts by the rule of right—they forget that that law ought to supersede the ties of party.

Mr. Fox's proclamation of his pretensions—which I allow

are very good, if qualifications gave a right of succession (which he did not indeed directly claim, naming the Duke of Portland for successor to Lord Rockingham, who certainly would not degenerate if insufficience proved the true heir),—has called forth a rival, who, it was foreseen, must become so sooner or later. Don't you anticipate me, and cry out 'What! Mr. William Pitt?' Yes! he is to be Secretary of State[1]—at two-and-twenty—that is some glory!

What else is to be, I am sure I cannot tell you. Perhaps by Tuesday night more may be settled; for, as the Parliament is to rise on Wednesday, the posts that may be vacant will be filled up, for the new writs to issue. Guesses I do not name, not to be obliged to contradict them. The new opposition will be weak in numbers, and have none at all but dignified ciphers in the House of Lords. Lord Rockingham's party was not numerous, though the strongest of any single faction; and it loses its real chief, the Duke of Richmond, and a few more. Fox and Burke are its only efficient men. There are other points on which you might wish to question me; but I do not choose to *write* more than might be in the newspapers, but with this difference, that I relate nothing but facts that have entity.

Monday.

The meeting at Lord Fitzwilliam's was not so unanimous as I had heard. Lord Temple was warmly with the Duke of Richmond, and two or three other Lords. The former, it is supposed, will be Secretary of State with his cousin Pitt. The Duke is grossly abused by the new separatists, as he had been before by the late administration. When a man is traduced by both sides, it is no bad symptom of his virtue. If a man sacrifices all parties to his momentary interest, he may be universally despised, but he does not

Letter 2331.—[1] This was not the case; he became Chancellor of the Exchequer.

provoke. If his change proceeds from conscience, he must be aspersed, that his integrity may not shine. As the Duke was conspicuously more proper for the first post than Lord Rockingham, he had more reason to be dissatisfied with the nomination than to support it. The trifling post of Master of the Ordnance could not be an object worthy of his ambition or selfishness; and, by retaining it, he shows he did not aim at an higher.

Tuesday.

If anything extraordinary should happen before Friday I will write again on that day, as this must go away to-night. I shall go to Strawberry at the end of the week, and come to town very seldom before winter,—consequently, shall know nothing but general news which I shall send you as usual. I never trouble myself about the disposition of places; I wish for peace fervently, and must preserve my own, if I cannot contribute to that of the public or of particulars. Luckily, I remember that I am older than almost any man left upon the stage, and will not hobble like Nestor to the siege of Troy, with boys three hundred years younger than myself, who would be tired of my old stories of their grandfathers. Adieu!

2332. To the Rev. William Mason.

Monday, July 8, 1782.

I wish you did come to town, for how is it possible to fold up chaos in a letter? nay, how can one relate and not have an opinion? I certainly have one, but it is more decided on the colour of dislike than on that of satisfaction. One can scarce avoid retrospect, or help saying how the worst might have been prevented, but I have not time to look back even ten days. I will go no farther than last Saturday, when, to be sure, a fraction of an aristocracy gave

itself as ridiculous airs as ever impertinence did. A meeting of the late Marquis's mutes was summoned at Lord Fitzwilliam's, and it was hoped that all present would swear allegiance to the urn of the departed, which was proclaimed to contain all that was precious in our country. The Duke of Richmond was impious enough to think peace with America preferable to those holy cinders, though they are said to contain and to be able to convey a right of transmitting the sceptre and purse of this nation to whom they pleased, or Lord John should please; and his Lordship pleased that the Duke of Portland should be the ostensible, and Mr. Fox the real monarch of the Whigs, and Mr. Fox was of the same opinion; not all the rest were. The Lords Berkeley, Craven, and De Ferrars presumed to dissent, and Lord Temple loudly; so nothing excepting Fox and Burke remained in the crucible, but the *caput mortuum*. I hope we shall have a codicil to Magna Charta produced, for we are certainly to have a new War of the Barons, a struggle between the King and some great peers in which the people are to go for nothing.

Don't imagine from what I have been saying that I am delighted on the other side; no, my good friend, I am a true Englishman, and am much more easily dissatisfied than pleased. I dislike the new dish that is served up, and shall taste but a few of the old ingredients that are tossed up again, and shall have no stomach at all to the older sauces that will come upon table again, and for which the new removes have made room.

Well! America and Ireland have had the sense and spirit to assert themselves; that is great comfort. England, alias Nova Scotia, little deserves freedom.

I know nothing certainly of the intended distribution of places. Mr. Pitt and Lord Temple I believe are to be Secretaries of State.

At this moment perhaps Lord Howe may be fighting the combined squadrons[1], who could not know that he had above fifteen ships, and he undoubtedly has twenty-three to their twenty-eight or thirty, and five three-deckers to their one, besides the flower of the ocean. We have a better chance by seamen than by politicians. *O Neptune, ora pro nobis!*

I am rejoiced that you do not intend to answer Mr. Hayley in heroics. Since gunpowder was invented and heroic virtue was out of fashion, and Circe and Calypso and Armida have left no natural children to inveigle a stray adventurer, whom the gods used to be so good as to assist in seeking his fortune, and help him into mishaps in order to get him out, I see no materials for making anew an old thing called an epic poem. Even demigods have intermarried till their race are become downright *mestises* (I forget the mongrel shades in the colonies), and have little of ethereal clay left in their composition; I mean those half-divinities whom antiquity called patriots, and the moderns, Russells and Sidneys. I could tell you some tales that would make your hair stand on end instead of dipping you in Castalia, but you may trust the new parties for not letting you remain in ignorance; they have mutual tales to tell, believe me.

Lord Harcourt, by a letter I have received to-day, says you are sitting on a rafter and dining out of a hod of mortar; no matter, you are at Nuneham and can stroll about Elysium. Whenever you are tired of it, you will be gladly received at Strawberry, and will find a saucer of hautboys for your dinner. Pray settle the plan for the castle, and bring the measurement of the windows that we may fit the painted glass to them, and, above all, torment

Letter 2332.—[1] Howe was at this time in command in the Channel. No battle took place; the jealousies between the French and Spanish commanders resulted in their retirement to Cadiz at the end of July.

Lady Harcourt to send me her poems, that I may begin printing. I shall be gathered to Caxton and my ancestors if she does not make haste. Adieu.

P.S. I was going to seal my letter when good old Lord George Cavendish came in. We talked over very coolly the new schism; I told him fairly that I wished they would, as they had united with Lord Shelburne, have borne with him for three months, entering what caveat or protest they pleased against his continuance, till the peace with America was concluded, Ireland settled, alliances concluded on the Continent, and perhaps reconciliation with Holland; and I added, 'My dear Lord, don't you think that this new dissension will be heard with transport in France?' he answered, 'Undoubtedly.' I was answered. I put the same question this morning to Mr. Fox—he replied, 'Oh, it will do a great deal of mischief.'—Judge.

To-morrow we shall hear Mr. Fox's reasons for his resignation. Lord George owned to me that there might be reasons that could *not* be given; I said, 'My Lord, will worse reasons satisfy the country?'

The most certain thing that will happen is a torrent of abuse on the Duke of Richmond, Lord Shelburne, and Mr. Fox; so malignity at least will have its saturnalia. The coarsest waters of the kennel will be thrown on the two former, but by what I hear as yet, there will be ten buckets for one emptied on the latter; and yet the most stinking may be diffused the widest.

2333. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, July 10, 1782.

Don't be frightened: I do not intend to write to you every day, I shall rusticate myself on Friday, and then you

will hear little of me more. Now I am not going to tell you the new arrangements, for General Conway forgets them as fast as he hears them. Yet they may be made, and you will learn them from the new writs.

My business is to give you a sketch of yesterday. It was a curious debate opened by a motion of inquiry on a thumping pension for life to Colonel Barré, signed by Lord Rockingham, Lord Althorp, and Fred Montagu, and defended by the two last, Lord John and Grenville. This was one of the tales I reserved. There is another parallel about Burke, but not a quarter so heavy. The debate soon wandered to the resignations. Charles Fox shone but did not dazzle, for his plea was very flimsy,—his suspicion of Lord Shelburne. He attacked General Conway too, and (which I think was a high compliment) called him *an innocent*, who knew nothing, thought nothing of men, but looked to measures, and had wrought great good and great evil. Conway avowed that he did look only to measures, not men, and produced his political creed reduced to the four articles on which the last brief administration had come into power, viz.—The reduction of the power of the crown, public economy, the independence of America and that of Ireland. By these tests he desired to be tried, and if he abandoned them, to be condemned; would the orders of the House permit it, he would leave the paper from which he spoke on the table. Mr. Fox not only declared that he regarded men, not measures, but—you will laugh—insisted that the nation calls for the Duke of Portland. The nation to be sure may call *odd men*[1], but certainly did not call for his Grace, who, till this nomination to Ireland, scarce an hundred men knew to exist. He has lived in ducal dudgeon with half a dozen toad-eaters, secluded from

Letter 2333.—[1] The cry of a chairman seeking a partner.

mankind behind the ramparts of Burlington wall[2], and overwhelmed by debts without a visible expense of two thousand pounds a year. It is very entertaining that two or three great families should persuade themselves that they have an hereditary and exclusive right of giving us a head without a tongue, nor is it less burlesque to see a fraction of an aristocracy demanding pre-eminence without one speaker in the House of Lords but—Lord Derby.

They will receive another blow as sensible as any they have experienced; Sir George Saville disapproves their proud retreat.

If yesterday was not propitious to the renewed opposition, it was not more flattering to the person of the new Premier[3], who was rudely handled, and defended by a Sir William Wake alone, of whom I never heard before. Burke threw a whole basket of invectives on him collected from the Roman history down to Mother Goose's Tales. The voice of the town, however, does not hail Mr. Fox, and yet I question whether Lord Shelburne will not soon be the more unpopular.

I have heard this morning, though from no absolute authority, that Lord Howe is returned to St. Helen's, declaring he had found the combined fleets too strong to be attacked yet, though he has but twenty-four ships, and they thirty: it was yesterday expected that we should hear he had fought, and was victorious. I do not at all know how this is to be taken; that is, in what light it is to be

[2] Burlington House, lent by the Duke of Devonshire to his brother-in-law, the Duke of Portland, who was 'in too great straits to have a house of his own. His fortune . . . had been noble; but obscure waste, enormous expense in contesting the counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland with Sir James Lowther . . . and too much compassion for an idle and worthless younger brother, Lord Edward, to support whose extravagance he had deeply dipped his estate, had brought him into great distresses, now increased by the expense of his Viceroyalty, which he did not enjoy long enough to indemnify himself.' (*Last Journals*, vol. ii. p. 548.)

[3] The Earl of Shelburne.

interpreted with regard to Lord Keppel[4], for that will be the consideration on both sides, and not the measure or manœuvre. The nation's good will be pretended, and neither side will think of it except Mr. Conway. Adieu! I am impatient to be gone. All is barefaced faction; ambition and interest have cut away their vizors, or sold them parlous dear. Both sides are alike: one cannot value either. Whenever the nation gets an advantage, it is like a half-gnawed bone tossed to a dog under the table.

2334. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, July 11, at midnight, 1782.

I am this minute come from Lady Mary Coke's, at Notting Hill, where I dined with the present Commander-in-Chief[1] and the late Chancellor of the Exchequer[2], and though the party had been made before the rupture, nothing could pass more amicably; nay, Lord John left us to sup at Richmond House. All this is mighty well, and I might compliment myself on having contributed to preserve appearances; yet I see how little they will last, when any opportunity offers of discovering what is under the embers. Nay, I believe what moderation remains proceeds from perceiving already how ill the late precipitation is generally taken. Very ill, indeed, by all not immediately connected with the principal actors.

On my table I found your Ladyship's letter, and sit down to answer it, late as it is, because I shall leave London to-morrow with no thoughts of seeing it again in haste; for, though my two friends have acted rightly, I am far from being enamoured of anything else. It flatters me much to find that I am so fortunate as to agree with your Ladyship

[4] First Lord of the Admiralty.

Letter 2334.—[1] General Conway.
[2] Lord John Cavendish.

and Lord Ossory, and to find you so full of confidence on a point on which I had no right to expect any. You may be assured nothing you have said will pass my lips; indeed, I shall see nobody to-morrow, and am going to vegetate only among my dowagers.

It is self-evident that the sole way of preventing much evil was by remaining. Nor is it less certain that the rash steps taken must please infinitely in a place whence dissension was always cultivated. What could the opening of so many doors produce but the introduction of some of the late discarded? It will not, in truth, surprise me if the introductor himself is at last sent to graze: nor was I in the wrong when I said in the first moment that power was *lapsed* back again. Some very disgraceful circumstances that have just come out will repay what has been lost with usury, for all credit in patriotism must be lost when its wages are so high.

Your private lamentation, Madam, is equally well founded, though the relapse will be much more dangerous to Mr. Fox than to Mr. Fitzpatrick, whose stamina are of stouter texture; the former, I fear, will destroy himself. I was on the point of saying to him t'other morning, 'Well, but you must not go and play at taw again!' but I thought it would be impertinent. What can one suggest that he does not know and must have thought? I did flatter myself that he now was on the high road to all he ought to attain —he would have attained it—but he will neither live to reach the goal, nor, when Parliament is not sitting, take the least pains to promote his own views. But I blame myself for expatiating when you, Madam, have comprised in a short fable the quintessence of all I could say. It is so just, that I wish Mr. Fox had seen it *last Wednesday sevennight.* I do confess it is he on whose account I am mortified. I had pleasure in thinking that, old as I am, I should yet see

a first-rate minister who would revive this country. That vision is over, and every other! I have been shown a glimpse of a New Jerusalem: I waked, and found it was a dream!—here conclude my politics. All will run back into the old channel. A miracle happened—and might almost as well not. At sixty-five it is too late to look forward again. I am as much disappointed as if I had had personal views; but I confess that I find it more easy to comfort myself from having had none. I can wish well to England, as I did before; but when one can neither do good nor prevent mischief, it is allowable to leave the public to itself. It will be a capital loss to me if your Ladyship and Lord Ossory adhere to your purpose of going abroad; but I cannot be so selfish as to disapprove it. Next winter, I am persuaded with you, will be very disagreeable, and to you an anxious one. What one cannot remedy, it is best to avoid.

Thank you exceedingly once more, Madam, for your letter and fable, and be assured, wherever you are, that while I remain here, I shall be most unalterably

Yours, &c.

2335. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, July 17, 1782.

I answer your letter directly, that I may lose no time in obeying Lady Harcourt's commands. I have very little else to say, knowing, and intending to know, nothing since I left London. A few words in answer to yours will suffice. My two friends[1] could do no other than they did, being persuaded from the importance of what was pending abroad, that they should be criminal in quitting at such a moment. Mr. Conway, in particular, had differed and carried the very

Letter 2335.—[1] Richmond and Conway.

point against Mr. Fox, on which the latter pretends to have broken. It would have been extraordinary, indeed, if Conway had made that a plea for resigning!

As to the consequences of the rupture, I have no doubt but that they will be the restoration of the old system, sooner or later, in whole or in part; but so I foresaw they would be the moment Lord Rockingham died. Indeed, that was the intention before he came in, for so early had the division begun; or rather, there never had been any union. Pride, rashness, folly, and knavery, have dissipated even pretences, and everything is to begin anew. If you have youth or courage enough to commence a fresh chase, I have no objection. For myself, I confess I am too old; nor am I eager to be aiding and abetting more Irish adventurers[2] in getting pensions of 3,000*l.* a year. They have picked the pockets of others full as honest as themselves, and call it saving the nation's money! I shall preserve the principles I have always maintained, but merely as old-fashioned Gothic relics, that are of no use. Some mischiefs are prevented, and now and then some little advantage is obtained for the country *par bricole* by opposition, but you see, and I earlier saw, how all oppositions, when successful, terminate. But I doubt the question, I mean in practice, is reduced to this:—kings want to have slaves for nothing; patriots want to be richly paid for being slaves. All, therefore, that liberty gets is by having the question undecided: opposition keeps it undecided, and implies that there is something to be gotten by it. Thus I am glad there will be a new opposition, but as to believing in its views, or expecting any benefit to my country from its success, you will excuse me.

I shall be glad to receive *my notes*: I have kept no copy, and wanted to see them, as I have begun the continuation,

[2] An allusion to Colonel Barré.

and would not have the style very incongruous; but I had much rather you would bring them yourself. You promised me a visit: the uninhabitable state of Nuneham makes it impossible for me to come to you. Let us amuse ourselves with pleasanter objects than politics: nothing is left of England but the corpse, which, you see, is very carrion, for the vultures prey on it. I can tell you much of what has passed of late, but for the future am determined neither to think on or concern myself with public affairs. My chief business, if Lady Harcourt and you please, shall be to be her printer and your commentator, and the more you both employ me, the better I shall be satisfied.

P.S. It is not probable that the ticket should reach Mr. Wilmot before Saturday, but as I am to have some *archæologists*[3] that day, I was forced to except it. I would not haggle with Lady Harcourt, or should have wished to fix the day, for I have been so invaded lately and had so many quarrels, that I am forced to be rigorous about my rules, and restrict the number to *four*, as I have been seriously abused for having made some exceptions.

2336. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, July 21, 1782.

Your letter of the 6th, which I received to-day, sets me to writing, though I have no novelty to tell you since the new arrangement of the administration, of which, I think, I gave you a sketch in my last of the 9th. The most material part to you is the addition of Lord Grantham as Secretary of State. He is a sort of old acquaintance of yours when he was at Vienna, and, I suppose, at Madrid; though, I believe, you never met. He is a very agreeable,

[3] Messrs. Gough and Nichols.

pleasing man. Lord Shelburne is certainly the minister paramount.

The moment is certainly a solemn one: the combined fleets are at the mouth of the Channel, but Lord Howe, though with inferior force, is watching them, and is very different from such old women as Hardy and Darby, and has a most chosen set of officers, men, and ships; as at land we have General Conway, instead of that log of wood, Lord Amherst, whose stupidity and incapacity were past belief, though, before he was known, he was for a moment a hero; for more moments supposed a great man, the Lord knows why.

I have been here these ten days, consequently know nothing more than what you see in the papers; I must therefore owe the rest of my letter to answering yours. It is not worth while, even for the sake of a paragraph, to tell you that my last morsel of gout was acquired by being blooded twice for the influenza, which I had one of the first. I am now mighty well for me.

I am quite ignorant of your nephew's late campaign in Kent, of which I know nothing but by your letter. I do but cast my eye on the newspapers, which are detestable for their lies, blunders, and scandal, and are half filled by letters of the partisans of different factions, whose sole object is to mislead and infuse prejudices. I never look at the advertisements and paragraphs that relate to elections; and must be surfeited, you may well imagine, after sixty years, with the clamours of parties with which I have nothing to do. Your nephew I have not seen for some time. He has, I truly think, a good heart; but, being a little volatile and precipitate, his honesty is apt to make him take his part without much consideration. This may draw him into difficulties, but not into disreputable ones. Experience will make him more wary; and he will distrust

his own judgement, when he finds it is not an infallible guide.

I know not what to say about poor Mozzi! We have not heard a word from Lucas, who has all the immovable intrepidity of his shameless profession. Lawyers have so combined the ideas of gaining time and gaining money, that they certainly think delay is positive wealth—but here is a new difficulty: Mr. Morrice sent me word the other day that his health grows so much worse, he must go abroad. I went and dined with him at Chiswick two days ago. He has totally lost the use of his legs and feet, but did not look so ill as I expected. He does not seem positively determined on going, but promised to write to me as soon as he is fixed, as he will to Mozzi, if he does go. He asked me what advice he should give. I knew not what to say—I condemn my nephew and his council to the last degree—but is it possible in decency to give advice (did I know what, which I do not) against the person by whom I am entrusted to act? In short, if Mozzi does not come over himself, the cause may be endless—a lawyer, no more than a tradesman, has the least scruple of promising dispatch, and breaking his word: a lie with both is a mere expletive. All Cav. Mozzi's submissions have been in vain, perhaps have turned against him, by making Lucas presume his cause was not good; for an attorney is so void of sensibility, that he thinks honour, delicacy, or a love of peace, are only symptoms of a flaw in a title. As a diamond can only be cut by a diamond, an attorney can only be foiled by an attorney. If Mozzi would come and rake the Inns of Court for another Lucas, he might succeed.

I do not recollect what you said of an *old portrait*: you told me something about one, but I forget what; you now say I have seen it—not to my knowledge. My memory and other defects tell me how old I grow. I hope at least

to remember that I do forget. Ancient folks are apt to parry and palliate their decays: it is my study to watch them, and convince myself of them; which one should think would not be difficult—but self-love is such a flatterer! Adieu!

Monday 22nd. I had sealed my letter, but open it again to tell you that I have just had a note from Mr. Morrice, who is determined to set out immediately, and will write to Cav. Mozzi to advise him to name Mr. Duane for his referee. He cannot make a better choice; but, as *I* first proposed Mr. Duane, I doubt they will make exceptions, because Mr. Duane is *too* proper. However, I know not what better can be done, but for Mozzi to come himself.

2337. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, July 23, 1782.

I have been more dilatory than usual, dear Sir, in replying to your last, but it called for no particular answer, nor have I now anything worth telling you. Mr. Gough and Mr. Nichols dined with me on Saturday last. I lent the former three-and-twenty drawings of monuments out of Mr. Lethuillier's books, for his large work, which will be a magnificent one. Mr. Nichols is, as you say, a very rapid editor, and I must commend him for being a very accurate one. I scarce ever saw a book so correct as his Life of Mr. Bowyer[1]. I wish it deserved the pains he has bestowed on it every way, and that he would not dub so many men *great*. I have known several of his heroes, who were very *little* men. Dr. Meade had nothing but pretensions, and Philip Carteret Webbe was a sorry knave with still less foundations. To what a slender total do those shrink who

Letter 2337. — [1] William Bowyer the younger (1699–1777), printer. Nichols had been his partner.

are the idols of their own age! How very few are known at all at the end of the next century! But there is a chapter in Voltaire that would cure anybody of being a great man even in his own eyes. It is the chapter in which a Chinese goes into a bookseller's shop, and marvels at not finding any of his own country's classics. It is a chapter that ought never to be out of the sight of any vain author.

I have just got the new catalogue of the MSS. in the Museum. It is every way piteously dear—the method is extremely puzzling, and the contents chiefly rubbish. Who would give a rush for Dr. Birch's correspondence? many of the pieces are in print. In truth, I set little store by a collection of MSS. A work must be of little value that could never get into print, I mean, if it has existed half a century. The articles that diverted me most were an absolute novelty; I knew Henry VIII was a royal author, but not a royal quack. There are several receipts of his own, and this delectable one amongst others. 'The King's Grace's oyntement made at St. James's, to coole, and dry, and comfort the ——.' Another, to the same purpose, was devised at Cawode[2]—was not that an episcopal palace? how devoutly was the head of the Church employed!

I hope you have recovered your spirits, and that summer, which is arrived at last, will make a great amendment in you.

Yours most sincerely,
H. W.

[2] About nine miles from York. The palace (now ruined) belonged to the Archbishops.

2338. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 4, 1782.

I have received your or rather my volume and the notes. I had already sketched the preface, but not having the *Epistle* here I could proceed no further. However, as I must go to town to-morrow I shall bring one down with me; but probably finish this letter there, for I have nothing to tell you, and I am sure am not in your debt for letters or a visit. Nay, I do not perceive that your presence at Nuneham advances any work there. I have neither received Lady Harcourt's MS. nor a design for the Gothic building, which my painted glass is to deck. Does your being within the vortex of Oxford benumb all your faculties?

I have borrowed and been reading Monsr. de Lille's [1] poem on gardening: it is a poor affair, with here and there, but rarely, a few pretty lines, amidst hundreds of very flat. He seems to have no scientific taste in the matter, but to have picked up some lean ideas which he repeats over and over, and tries to embellish with modern philosophy, a mode more impertinent than their native levity. Their beards are as factitious and awkward as their crooks and scripts were when they used to write about their *bergères* and *hameaux*, and dress Pan and satyrs in flesh-coloured lutestring. You will like better to hear sayings of George Selwyn. On Lord Camden's son [2] having another place, he said, '*Sat prata biberunt*,' and that the nomination of the Duke of Portland for First Lord of the Treasury put him in mind of an old Presbyterian tract, called, *A shove to a*

Letter 2338.—[1] The Abbé Jacques Delille (1738–1813); his poem was called *Les Jardins*.

[2] Hon. John Jeffreys Pratt (1759–1840), afterwards styled Viscount Bayham; eldest son of first Baron (afterwards first Earl) Camden, whom he succeeded in 1794. He was created Marquis Camden in 1812.

heavy . . . Christian. In short, he who never read anything, has always a quotation ready and apropos.

Lord Monboddo has proposed himself to Mrs. Garrick, but she rejected *the union*, as the Scots threaten to do; and as it would be lucky if they did—much luckier if they always had, instead of sending all their lean cattle to be fatted in our pastures.

Pray tell Lord Harcourt that poor Clive is better, yet her fits of the jaundice return so often that I much doubt her recovery. Indeed the apothecary fears her liver is affected—she is shrunk to an astonishing degree.

Lady Di Beauclerk is painting a room at her charming villa that was Mr. Gyles's, and that I have christened *Spencer Grove*. It is nothing but a row of lilacs in festoons on green paper, but executed in as great a style as Michael Angelo would have done for a Pope's villa; and without even making a sketch. You would know the *countenance of every* single flower, and call them by their names, but alas! those glorious wreaths that you would wish to cut out and glaze, were any glasses large enough, are painted in water colours, and will not last two summers. In each panel of the surbase she has painted a sprig or chaplet of geranium, or ivy, or periwinkle, and every one is a capital picture. Every plant has its identic character, as her human figures have. You have never seen my picture of her gipsies telling a country girl's fortune, but I don't pity you; you might see it if you would, but I never wish any one to do what is not done but by solicitation.

Berkeley Square, 6th.

I am in town, but it looks as if nobody else was, every house is shut up. I don't understand the language of bricks, or I dare to say I could send you very entertaining dialogues, more entertaining than what servants say to

one another of their masters, and a good deal more true, and I dare to say still less favourable.

2339. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 4, 1782.

I should have written, Madam, had I had anything to tell you: but what can I send from hence but repetitions of the samenesses of every summer? I pass most of my evenings at the hospital of the poor Montroses; Clifden[1] is little less an infirmary. I have dined again with the Princess Amelie, and twice with the Hertfords at Ditton, and see a great deal of my family, who are cantoned around me like those of a patriarch, when tribes began to increase and remove to small distances. My brother[2] is at Isleworth, Lady Dysart at Ham, the Keppels at the Stud, the Waldegraves at the Pavilions, and Lady Malpas in the Palace[3]; but I am not the better stocked with materials for letters; nor, though the neighbourhood is enriched by some invention, as Lady Cecilia Johnston's at Petersham, and Lady Bridget Tollemache's on Ham Common, is my gazette at all flourishing, since we have ceased to be on the high road to intelligence. Lord North, finding Bushy Park too solitary since his sun was set, is gone on a progress into the Tory regions of Oxford and Staffordshire; and Mr. Ellis has moulted his French horns with the seals. The events of our district have been confined to the death of Mr. Prado, the marriage of Miss Pococke[4], the death and will of Mr. Child[5], which have occupied us more than the hide

Letter 2339.—[1] Little Strawberry Hill, where Mrs. Clive lived.

[2] Sir Edward Walpole.

[3] Hampton Court Palace, where she had apartments.

[4] Sophia (d. 1811), daughter of Admiral Sir Charles Pocock; m. John Poulett, Viscount Hinton, eldest son of third Earl Poulett, whom he succeeded in 1788.

[5] Robert Child, of Osterley Park, a partner in Child's Bank.

and seek of the hostile fleets. Bankruptcies, houses to be sold or let, and robberies every night, fill up the gazette of our neighbourhood, but would make dull journals into another country. I have forsworn politics, and have no connection with the next generation. I know nothing of what the Prince of Wales does; and for him who only *undoes*[6], I am like his Laureat, and talk of anything rather than of him.

George[7] and La Mimie called on me half an hour ago; he is gone to pass a day or two with Colonel Keene on Hampton Court Green; so the fall of a party can make people as fond of one another, as two Englishmen, that are perfect strangers, if they happen to meet in China! George is all afflictions; the Duke of Queensberry has broken a tendon, and Mrs. Webbe is dying. I love him so well that I hope he will never have greater calamities.

Lady Chewton is a very good young woman, Madam, and I rejoice that Lord and Lady Waldegrave are satisfied with her. Lady Sefton's politics must be admirable: Mrs. Bouverie[8], I hear, is a great politician too. The trade will grow more entertaining if the ladies make it the fashion: it was become as much a profession of calculation as that of a banker's shop. I do not know what it would not become, since *honest* Colonel Barré has established a drawback for principles.

I was indeed, Madam, excessively diverted with *The Agreeable Surprise*[9]: it is excellent nonsense, and very original. Whatever is so, has great merit in my eyes: I would not give sixpence a ream for what Mr. Hayley and such copyists

[6] The King.

[7] George Selwyn.

[8] Harriet, daughter of Sir Everard Fawkener, Knight; m. 1. (1764) Hon. Edward Bouverie, second son of first Viscount Folkestone and first Earl of Radnor of that family. She was a lady of pronounced Whig views. She married, secondly (in 1811), Lord Robert Spencer, and died in 1825.

[9] A comic opera by John O'Keeffe, produced at the Haymarket Theatre in 1781.

write. I am sorry you are to pay half as much for this letter, Madam, but what can I do? I have condemned myself to pass the end of my life as insipidly as I possibly can; and yet, since you will have the goodness to recollect me, I cannot give up gratitude, as I have all entertainment; but when I have told you that I am grateful, I have nothing else worth telling you of your ever devoted,

H. W.

2340. To Charles Bedford.

Dear Sir, Strawberry Hill, Aug. 12, 1782.

I yesterday received from Mr. Rose[1] the following order:—

'Sir,—I am commanded by the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury to desire you will forthwith cause to be made out and transmitted to me for their Lordships' information,—

'An account of the ordinary allowance of stationery delivered into this office in the year 1780; together with the prices of each article, and the amount of the whole.

'An account of the extraordinary allowance of stationery, and all other necessaries whatsoever, delivered to the Lords, Secretary, Clerks, or any other person in this office, within the same time; together with the prices of each article, and the amount of the whole.

'I am, Sir, &c.,

'George Rose.

'*Treasury Chambers, 10th Aug.*, 1782.'

I beg, dear Sir, that you will immediately make out the accounts required with the most rigid exactness and truth. I have, you know, nothing to disguise or palliate, and I wish you to be over-minute rather than omit anything. The whole world is welcome to know everything relating to my office. I have never, in above forty years that I have enjoyed the office, made or sought to make the smallest advantage of

Letter 2340.—[1] George Rose (1744–1818), Secretary to the Treasury.

it beyond my just and legal dues. I have never solicited any favour in it, and, as you know, constantly ordered your father and you to take care that the office was served in the best manner, and that the goods I supplied should be purchased of the most substantial tradesmen, and for which I constantly paid the best prices. In short, I have always acted in my office in a manner so much to my credit, that I should be glad to have my conduct scrutinized in the most rigid way; but of that say nothing—I desire no parade or ostentation.

When you have drawn up the accounts as faithfully as you can possibly, pray bring them hither to me before you deliver them. In the meantime I would have you call immediately on Mr. Rose, and tell him, with my compliments, that the orders shall be obeyed as fast as you can, and *that I have directed you to be as minute, exact, and particular as possible.* Say those very words.

Yours most sincerely,

Hor. Walpole.

2341. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 15, 1782.

I am greatly proud, Madam, of having formed so able a scholar as your Ladyship. Be assured that you will every day find more comfort in becoming an antiquary. The study of antiquity has a multitude of advantages over other pursuits. All its discoveries produce new lights and no disappointments. They are not doubtful, like the fruits of sciences that depend on reasoning. Is it not charming too, that one may choose one's field of inquiry? You may pursue the conquest of France with Edward and Henry, humble Spain with Queen Bess, or with her, treat the Dutch with haughty kindness. You may plant colonies

in America with Drake, Raleigh, and Cavendish; subdue Tyrone, and fetch the regal chair from Scone, instead of being on the point of restoring it. Then, by choosing your period, you may choose your party; and in the Wars of the Roses change according to the prevailing side, with every revolution. All this naturally follows, if you dive into the secrets of old families. You grow interested about their heroes, and forget our contemporaries and the present state,

——— From what height fallen!

But I will proceed to your interrogatories, Madam. The shield certainly contains the arms and quarterings of a Sydney. Quarter 1st, is Sydney. 2nd, Dudley. 3rd, Somery, or, two lions in pale azure. 4th, Gray. 5th, Beauchamp. 6th, Old Warwick, or and azure, with a chevron ermine, always quartered by the Beauchamps.

The shield, therefore, I conclude to belong to a female Sydney, who married an earl, and thence, perhaps, Frances Countess of Sussex[1], foundress of Sydney College. There are, I believe, instances of ladies who have given only their own arms; or such a shield might answer to another of her husband, in which were only his arms. Had she impaled his, they would have been impaled, not quartered, on the man's side; but could not possibly be in the last quarter. Nor could the shield, even without the coronet, represent Sir Henry Sydney's widow[2], who would have impaled her own arms, or if she had borne her own alone, would have given them alone, and not her husband's alone.

Thus, a little too like a genuine antiquary, I have answered your Ladyship's questions, without satisfying your curiosity.

LETTER 2341.—[1] Frances (d. 1589), daughter of Sir William Sidney, Knight, of Penshurst, wife of Thomas Radcliffe, third Earl of Sussex of that family, and sister of Sir Henry Sidney mentioned below.

[2] Lady Mary Dudley, daughter of the Duke of Northumberland. She was married to Sir Henry in 1551, and died in 1586.

Nor could I ever unravel to my own satisfaction the history of Ampthill-Houghton. By the busts in the house, and by the crests in the frieze without, it is certain that it was possessed by the Sydneys. The new-discovered shield confirms it; and perhaps does, connected with your Ladyship's postscript, which I have since received by itself, explain the whole. As you have found that Robert the first Earl of Leicester was steward of the manors of Anne of Denmark, and that Ampthill was a jointure manor of queens, and as one of the busts is of his sister Mary, Countess of Pembroke (the Arcadian), is it not possible, that as the greater Ampthill was the manor-house, Houghton-Ampthill might be a lodge which he lent or obtained a grant of to his sister Lady Pembroke[3]; who, being a Sydney, and more proud of her brother Sir Philip and her own family than of her husband[4], might decorate the house with her own emblems, and as a sort of foundress leave a shield of her own arms only with the coronet to testify her dignity? I think we used to doubt whether the male bust was her husband's or her brother's, Sir Philip. I prefer this hypothesis to my first idea of the shield belonging to Lady Sussex.

Mightily I am pleased with Mr. Leveson's[5] legacy to Captain Waldegrave. We do not seem in a course that will enrich him by prizes. I had no curiosity about Monsieur de Grasse[6], though I was in town for two days while he

[3] Lady Pembroke received a grant of the manor of Houghton Conquest (or Ampthill Park) from James I in 1615. She built a house there, which was probably the one which excited Walpole's interest.

[4] Henry Herbert (circ. 1534–1601), second Earl of Pembroke.

[5] Hon. Baptist Leveson-Gower, fourth son of first Baron Gower and great-uncle of Captain Waldegrave. He died on Aug. 4, 1782, aged eighty-one.

[6] On Wednesday, Aug. 5, 'Count de Grasse with his suite landed on South Sea Common, Portsmouth, where carriages had been procured by Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Parker, who conducted them to the George, where a most sumptuous dinner had been procured for him and his suite by Sir Peter, who entertained him and his officers at his own expense until the Count had permission to

was the object of the moment. To be sure, he was something of a sight; but formerly beaten French admirals were no rarity to us.

Mr. Morrice is gone to some mud-baths, I forget where. Having been turning over my books since your postscript arrived, I must hurry my letter, for I am not dressed, my dinner is ready, my cousin Mr. T. Walpole is with me, and I shall not have time to say more after dinner.

2342. To the Earl of Strafford.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 16, 1782.

If this letter reaches your Lordship, I believe it must be conveyed by a dove; for we are all under water, and a postman has not where to set the sole of his foot. They tell me that in the north you have not been so drowned, which will be very fortunate; for in these parts everything is to be apprehended for the corn, the sheep, and the camps: but, in truth, all kinds of prospects are most gloomy, and even in lesser lights uncomfortable. Here we cannot stir, but armed for battle. Mr. Potts, who lives at Mr. Hindley's, was attacked and robbed last week at the end of Gunnersbury Lane, by five footpads who had two blunderbusses. Lady Browne and I do continue going to Twickenham Park; but I don't know how long it will be prudent, nor whether it is so now.

I have not been at Park Place, for Mr. Conway is never there, at least only for a night or two. His regiment was reviewed yesterday at Ashford Common, but I did not go to

go to London, which was not till Friday morning, when he set off with his suite, attended by the Admiral, who had previously sent an express to the George at Godalming to prepare dinner and beds; and on Saturday morning they pursued their route to Mrs. Nugent's (the mother of Lady Parker) in Queen Square, Westminster, where they arrived about three o'clock, from whence Count de Grasse walked up to the Royal Hotel in Pall Mall.' (*Ann. Reg.* 1782, p. 216.)

see it. In truth, I have so little taste for common sights, that I never yet did see a review in my life: I was in town last week, yet saw not Monsieur de Grasse; nor have seen the giant or the dwarf.

Poor Mrs. Clive is certainly very declining, but has been better of late; and, which I am glad of, thinks herself better. All visions that comfort one are desirable: the conditions of mortality do not bear being pried into; nor am I an admirer of that philosophy that scrutinizes into them: the philosophy of deceiving oneself is vastly preferable. What signifies anticipating what we cannot prevent?

I do not pretend to send your Lordship any news, for I do not know a tittle, nor inquire. Peace is the sole event of which I wish to hear. For private news, I have outlived almost all the world with which I was acquainted, and have no curiosity about the next generation, scarce more than about the twentieth century. I wish I was less indifferent, for the sake of the few with whom I correspond, your Lordship in particular, who are always so good and partial to me, and on whom I should indubitably wait, were I fit to take a long journey; but as I walk no better than a tortoise, I make a conscience of not incommodating my friends, whom I should only confine at home. Indeed, both my feet and hands are so lame, that I now scarce ever dine abroad. Being so antiquated and insipid, I will release your Lordship; and am, with my unalterable respects to Lady Strafford, your Lordship's most devoted humble servant,

Hor. Walpole.

2343. To George Rose.

Though I am very sorry, Sir, that you have had so much trouble on my account, I cannot entirely lament it, both as it has procured me a most obliging letter from you, and as it gives me an opportunity of explaining my expressions by Mr. Bedford, which, if I had had the pleasure of being better known to you, would not have surprised you.

As a very subordinate officer of the Exchequer, I have always known it was my duty to receive the commands of my superiors, the Lords of the Treasury, with respect and obedience, and to give them any information that they please to demand of me. I owe everything I have to the crown and the public, and certainly by no merit of my own; the servants of the crown and the public are entitled to any lights that can fall to my province to furnish; and so far from having any secrets in my office, I would not keep it an hour, by any mystery, subterfuge, or disguise. I once received an inquiry from Mr. Robinson something parallel, Sir, to yours, and, as Mr. Bedford can tell you, immediately complied with his request.

When the Commissioners of Accounts sent for Mr. Bedford, I gave him the most positive orders to lay before them the most minute details of my office, and answer their every question circumstantially.

Forgive my troubling you, Sir, with these particulars about myself: they are only meant to show you that so far from entertaining any jealousy about my office, I think myself accountable for every part of it, and should blush if I were not ready and willing to give it: perhaps that delicacy made me express myself a little more eagerly than the case deserved.

Letter 2343.—Not in C.; reprinted from Lord Orford's *Works* (1798), vol. ii. pp. 388–9.

With regard to Lord Shelburne's or your own desire of information, I beg both will command me or Mr. Bedford on any occasion without ceremony. I feel extremely obliged to you, Sir, for your readiness in explaining your orders; and I must entreat you to present my most respectful thanks to Lord Shelburne for his Lordship's condescension and attention, to which my insignificance had no pretensions, but which must increase my gratitude. I would take the liberty of thanking his Lordship myself, but he cannot have time to read complimentary letters. I fear, Sir, I have taken up but too much of yours, for which I beg your pardon, and have the honour to be with great regard,

Sir,

Your most obedient and most obliged humble servant,

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 18, 1782. HORACE WALPOLE.

2344. To JOHN NICHOLS.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 18, 1782.

MR. WALPOLE is extremely obliged to Mr. Nichols for the books and prints; and begs, when he sees Mr. Gough, to thank him for his obliging present of Mr. Brown's tract.

2345. To THE HON. HENRY SEYMOUR CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 20, 1782.

YOU know I am too reasonable to expect to hear from you when you are so overwhelmed in business, or to write when I have nothing upon earth to say. I would come to town, but am to have company on Thursday, and am engaged with Lady Cecilia[1] at Ditton on Friday, and on Monday I am to

LETTER 2344.—Not in C.; reprinted from Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iii. p. 302.

LETTER 2345.—Collated with original in possession of Earl Waldegrave.

[1] Lady Cecilia Johnston.

dine and pass the day at Sion Hill; and, as I am twenty years older than anybody of my age, I am forced to rest myself between my parties. I feel this particularly at this moment, as the allied houses of Lucan and Althorp have just been breakfasting here, and I am sufficiently fatigued.

I have not been at Oatlands for years; for consider I cannot walk, much less climb a precipice; and the Duke of Newcastle has none of the magnificence of petty princes in a romance or in Germany, of furnishing calashes to those who visit his domains. He is not undetermined about selling the place; but besides that nobody is determined to buy it, he must have Lord Lincoln's consent.

I saw another proud prince yesterday, your cousin Seymour[2] from Paris, and his daughter. She was so dishevelled, that she looked like a pattern doll that had been tumbled at the Custom House.

I am mighty glad that war is gone to sleep like a *paroli* at faro, and that the rain has cried itself to death; unless the first would dispose of all the highwaymen, footpads, and housebreakers, or the latter drown them, for nobody hereabouts dare stir after dusk, nor be secure at home. When you have any interval of your little campaigns, I shall hope to see you and Lady Aylesbury here.

2346. To Sir Horace Mann

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 20, 1782.

I did think it long since I heard from you; but your letter of July 30th explains your silence, on your ignorance to whom you was to address yourself on the late changes. In fact, no new Secretaries of State were appointed for some time, none therefore could write to you; nor could I tell you who was your new principal, till you had one. Events

[2] Henry Seymour, of Sherborne, Dorset. He lived near Paris.

there have been none to tell you; for the hide and seek at which the combined fleets have been playing with ours, produced none till each returned to its own home. Ours, they say, is to relieve Gibraltar, but I do not answer for the truth. I have been in town but two nights for a great while, and know no better than the newspapers what is passing. I have heard here that we have abandoned Georgia and the royalists to the mercy of their enemies; but perhaps there is not a word of truth in it. A suburban village is no very authentic coffee-house. Our Jamaica and Leeward fleets are arrived safely. Such articles are very important in war, though they made no figure in the history of a campaign. The fleets might almost sail up hither; for we have had such incessant deluges of rain, that our quiet Thames looks like a little turbulent ocean, and seems setting up for itself too, like others of its sovereign's dominions.

I approve very much of Cavalier Mozzi's letter, of which you have sent me the copy; and rejoice that he is coming himself. You had not when you wrote, I perceive, received my notification of Mr. Morrice's journey abroad. He set out immediately for some German mud-baths. Mozzi will find that neither he nor I had neglected our trust. I wish he do not find like difficulties; yet I am persuaded that his presence will, if anything can, quicken my Lord's lawyers—though, in truth, if justice is blind, lawyers are deaf. Lucas has the *sang-froid* of a Stoic—or greater, for he feels for others no more than they only pretended to do for themselves.

Monsieur de Grasse has been here, and was graciously treated; which is more than it is thought he will be at home. I hope he will not be used as inhumanly as poor Admiral Byng, whose fate the French so justly condemned.

I shall be very sorry if your attendance on the Duchess of Parma has over-fatigued you: may you be quit for the

ennui which such ceremonies must create after a certain age! I never feel my antiquity so much as when I am obliged to appear at any of those functions. Courts were not made for old age; it requires all the giddy insensibility of youth not to be struck with such farces. How one should smile if one could look down on a crowd of insects acting importance, dignity, or servility! And how would one of them reciprocally smile, could they observe one of our species tottering to the last to so foolish a pantomime! The young are a sort of insects who do remark that foolishness in their seniors—and they are in the right. Most things are excusable in youth, and almost all things become them. Few become the old but propriety, and that kind of quiet common sense that avoids particularities, and dreads to make itself talked of. Thus it would be affectation in you, who wear a public character, not to conform to its duties. But when I see men late in life thrust themselves into the world's face without a call, I feel a contemptuous pity for them—but they are always punished: they find themselves misplaced; and, the more they try to adapt themselves to the tone of an age to which they belong not, the more awkwardly they succeed. Not only the fashions in dress and manners change, but the ways of thinking, nay, of speaking and pronouncing. Even the taste in beauty and wit alters. A Helen, or a Lord Rochester, perhaps, would not be approved but in one specific half-century. Sir William Temple says that the Earl of Norwich, who had been the wit of the court of Charles I, was laughed at in that of Charles II. I myself remember that Lord Leicester, who had rather a jargon than wit, which was much admired in his day, having retired for a few years, and returning to town after a new generation had come about, recommenced his old routine, but was taken for a driveller by the new people in fashion, who

neither understood his phrases nor allusions. At least, neither man nor woman that has been in vogue must hazard an interregnum, and hope to resume the sceptre. An actor or actress that is a favourite may continue on the stage a long time; their decays are not descried, at least not allowed by those who grow old along with them; and the young, who come into the world one by one, hearing such performers applauded, believe them perfect, instead of criticizing; but if they quit the stage but for a few years, and return to it, a large crop of new auditors has taken possession, are struck with the increased defects, and do not submit, when in a body, to be told by the aged that such a performer is charming, when they hear and see to the contrary.

I wrote this two days ago, but have heard nothing to add. The war seems to partake of old age, and to be grown inactive—I wish it may be grown so old as to die soon. Sir William Draper, some weeks ago, preferred a complaint in form against General Murray; but the Judge Advocate said it was not sufficiently specific. I believe he has given one now less general; but the cause cannot be tried yet for want of Colonel Pringle, who was hostage for the transport vessels. The King's youngest son, Prince Alfred, was at the point of death this morning[1]. He is not two years old. Adieu!

2347. To Charles Bedford.

Dear Sir, Strawberry Hill, Aug. 23, 1782.

I have received so very civil and obliging a letter from Mr. Rose, that I will not give you the trouble of bringing the account down hither, but will desire you to deliver it

Letter 2346.—[1] He died on Aug. 20 'of a consumption, aged one year and eleven months.'

to him on Monday morning, and tell him that I have ordered you to give him at any time any information that he wishes to have, as far as you have it, or can be informed yourself.

I believe I shall not be able to be in town before the end of next week, but you shall know on what day as soon as I can fix it.

I am, dear Sir, yours most sincerely,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2348. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Friday evening, Aug. 30, 1782.

I HAVE this moment received from London your letter which Cardini brought, and shall send one of my servants to town to-morrow morning with this answer, and conclude he will not be set out on his return. As it will not go unless by him, I can have no difficulty of writing freely to you; and yet you will be surprised at the very little information I can give you. In short, I have totally done with politics—even with thinking on them, when I can help it. This country is absolutely lost. I mean, past recovery. The frenzy of the American war was pushed so far and so long, that, besides flinging away all we had acquired in near two centuries, doors have been thrown open to a thousand collateral misfortunes. Our credit has been screwed to a pitch that imminently endangers it all. There is an enormous debt yet unprovided for; nevertheless, the vast current expense continues. Ireland has shaken us off—not unfortunately, *if it goes no farther*; for it will flourish, which our jealousy hindered. Scotland, after doing us every mischief to the end of the last reign, and after engrossing everything in the present, seems to be at the eve of setting up for itself too. When it was little to be

expected, at least not five months before, a change happened in the spring, which delivered us at least from so criminal an administration. The new one, it is true, was but ill-cemented, and was dissolved by Lord Rockingham's death in three months; and in three days the remainder split to pieces.

I confess I had neither youth nor perseverance enough to form any new plan of hopes for my country. I took the resolution of abandoning even speculation and observation; and now, literally, never so much as ask a political question. I have no quarrels, no enemies. I wish most heartily well to Mr. Conway and the Duke of Richmond; I have always been civilly and obligingly treated by Lord Shelburne, therefore there is no disgust in my conduct: but I am so mortified at the fall of England, I see so little or no prospect of its ever being a great nation again, that I have not courage to hope about it. I have outlived the glory of my family and of my country. Houghton and England are alike stripped of all their honours.—But, instead of declamation, I will answer your letter.

Gibraltar, I am persuaded, will follow Minorca, if not already gone. So far from the fleet being sailed to its relief, part is gone in pursuit of the Dutch to the Baltic, though the Dutch are really in the Texel. I truly do not know what has occasioned this strange management. The papers ring with dissensions in the fleet; but the particulars I have not heard, for I have not been in London this month. Rodney, too, let the French fleet, that he had beaten and cooped up, slip out; which will probably occasion the loss of New York. The East Indies are not secure either. Mr. Fitzherbert is gone to Paris to treat. When they have quite ruined us, perhaps they may grant us a peace.

This is a summary of our situation, and of that of my mind; the latter certainly is not important enough to be

blended with the former, but was absolutely necessary to explain why I can tell you so little, and to prevent your concluding that there is some mystery or reserve in my behaviour: but as no changes make any either in my principles or fortune, you may be very sure that I am sincere, and that my politics have never had any object but first, the liberty, and then, the honour of my country. My friends have more than once succeeded; yet I have never accepted or asked the smallest emolument for myself. I may then, at sixty-five, say that I have never varied; but one may be tired out—I am, I own; and though I never meant to profit by the splendour of my country, I cannot be so fond of it in its depression and rags.

You say you had just written to me by the post. That letter is not arrived. Probably it talks of poor Mozzi. I can add nothing to all I have said about him in so many of mine.

I shall continue to send you any striking novelties; though, by the account I have given you of myself, I must become a less valuable correspondent. Indifference is not a good ingredient in letters—I think, in nothing; no, not where it is demanded, and commonly pretended, in history. But, if the writer does not keep his word, nor is the reader displeased; nay, if he is, it is only because the historian is not partial on the same side as his reader.

We have had the most deplorably wet summer that ever I remember, after three hotter than any in my memory. But I may as well finish when I have nothing better to talk of than the weather; it shows what a retired and insipid mortal I am.

I frequently ask Mrs. Noel, whom I see often at Twickenham Park, about your nephew; but she has only heard of him once at a cricket match [1], a proof of his being well.

LETTER 2348.—[1] Sir Horace Mann the younger was a great patron of cricket, and of the famous Hambledon Club in particular.

Cardini assured me, by a line, that he left you so, which he knew would be the most welcome news he could give me: and, if he saw me, he would carry you as favourable an account of me; for, though I think myself older than anybody of my age, my health in general is very good, and I am content with it; and, though my spirits are less nimble than they were, they are never low. Adieu! my dear Sir. Shall not we be very venerable in the annals of friendship? What Orestes and Pylades ever wrote to each other for four-and-forty years without once meeting?

2349. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 31, 1782.

It is very strange indeed, Madam, that you should make me excuses for writing, or think that I have anything better or even more urgent to do than to read your letters. It is very true that the Duchess de la Vallière, in a hand which I could not decipher, has recommended Count Soltikoff and his wife to me; but, oh! my shame, I have not yet seen them. I did mean to go to town to-day on purpose, but I have had the gout in my right eyelid, and it was swelled yesterday as big as a walnut; being now shrunk to less than a pistachio, I propose in two or three days to make my appearance, and plead my eye's big belly. Luckily the Countess was born in England, the daughter of the former Czernichew, and she is in such terrors of highwaymen, that I shall be quit for a breakfast; so it is an ill highwayman that blows nobody good. In truth it would be impossible in this region to amass a set of company for dinner to meet them. The Hertfords, Lady Holdernesse, and Lady Mary Coke did dine here on Thursday, but were armed as if going to Gibraltar; and Lady Cecilia Johnston would not venture even from Petersham—for in the town of Richmond

they rob even before dusk—to such perfection are all the arts brought! Who would have thought that the war with America would make it impossible to stir from one village to another? yet so it literally is. The colonies took off all our commodities down to highwaymen. Now being forced to mew and then turn them out like pheasants, the roads are stocked with them, and they are so tame that they even come into houses.

I have just been reading a most entertaining book, which I will recommend to you as you are grown antiquaries: I don't know whether it is published yet, for the author sent it to me. Part was published some time ago in the *Archæologia*, and is almost the only paper in that mass of rubbish that has a grain of common sense. It is Mr. E. King on ancient castles. You will see how comfortably and delectably our potent ancestors lived when in the constant state of war to which we are coming. Earls, barons, and their fair helpmates lived pell-mell in dark dungeons with their own soldiers, as the poorest cottagers do now with their pigs. I shall repent decking Strawberry so much, if I must turn it into a garrison.

Mr. Vernon was your Ladyship's informant about the Soltikoffs; but he gave me more credit for my intended civilities than I deserved. The French do not conceive, when they address strangers to us, that we do not at all live in their style. It is no trouble to them, who have miscellaneous dinners or suppers, to ask one or two more; nor are they at any expense in language, as everybody speaks French. In the private way in which I live, it is troublesome to give a formal dinner to foreigners, and more so to find company for them in a circle of dowagers, who would only jabber English scandal out of the *Morning Post*.

Mr. Fitzroy Scudamore, by a very old will, gives every-

thing to his daughter[1], consequently to Lord Surrey, who gets above 40,000*l.* An estate of 1,200*l.* a year goes to Lord Southampton[2], if Lady Surrey has no children. To two or three very old servants he has not left a farthing—it is no excuse that the will is of ancient date—why did not he make a later?

You are not serious, Madam, that Mr. Fox is going to Gibraltar! Is he to be Alexander at Oxydracæ, as well as at Statira's feet? But he may save himself the trouble; I should think the town gone by this time—which is more than our fleet is. Just this moment I hear the shocking loss of the *Royal George*[3]! Admiral Kempenfeldt is a loss indeed; but I confess I feel more for the hundreds of poor babes who have lost their parents! If one grows ever so indifferent, some new calamity calls one back to this deplorable war! If one is willing to content oneself in a soaking autumn with a match broken, or with the death of a Prince Duodecimus, a clap of thunder awakens one, and one hears that Britain herself has lost an arm or a leg. I have been expecting a deluge, and a famine, and such casualties as enrich a Sir Richard Baker; but we have all King David's options at once! and what was his option before he was anointed, freebooting too?

Drowned as we are, the country never was in such beauty; the herbage and leafage are luxurious. The Thames gives itself Rhone airs, and almost foams; it is none of your home-brewed rivers that Mr. Brown makes with a spade and a watering-pot. Apropos, Mr. Duane, like a good housewife, in the middle of his grass-plot has

Letter 2349.—[1] She was married to the Earl of Surrey.

[2] His great-nephew.

[3] While the *Royal George* was being careened at Spithead on Aug. 29, 1782, a large piece dropped out of her bottom, owing to her rotten condition, and she sank instantly. Eight hundred persons, including women and children, are supposed to have perished in her.

planted a pump and a watering-trough for his cow, and I suppose on Saturdays dries his towels and neckcloths on his orange-trees; but I must have done, or the post will be gone.

2350. To Thomas Walpole the Younger.

My dear Sir, Strawberry Hill, Sept. 6, 1782.

Though I shall lose your company, which I expected again with great pleasure, I must not lament your journey to Paris, as it will make your father and sisters so happy. Whenever you can make me amends, be assured I shall always be very thankful, and that you have no friend who more cordially wishes you well. I wish I had more power of showing you my regard. But though it is a barren friendship, it is a very sincere one, and not offered but to the very few whom I love and esteem.

I will trouble you with no commissions, but to tell your father how happy I should be to see *him* again, and how much I value *you*: and to beg you to bring me the residue of the *Voyage de la Grèce* that is published, the continuation of the *Bibliothèque des Romans*, and one cup, or a cup and saucer of the Sève china, in imitation of lapis lazuli.

I was in town on Wednesday for one night, and should certainly have contrived to see you if I had known of your going so soon, but I only found your letter here at my return. If you see poor Wiart, pray tell him how well Tonton is, and what care I take of him.

Yours most affectionately,

Hor. Walpole.

Letter 2350.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 64–5.

2351. To Earl Harcourt.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 7, 1782.

I am most impatient, my dear Lord, for an account of the conclusion of all the various and great works carrying on at Nuneham. I am earnest to hear that the house is finished, that the tower designed by Mr. Mason is ready to receive my painted glass, that he has written several novelties, and is coming to make me a visit as he promised, and that Lady Harcourt has settled, and had transcribed the MS. that I am to print. These things, and perhaps a great many more, I conclude, have been pursued with unremitting diligence, as no soul has had a moment's time to send me a line; though Mr. Mason is so punctual a correspondent, that I know he would not have been so long silent, if he had not been so occupied by the works at Nuneham, which, he knows, I prefer to my own satisfaction. However, as all must be terminated in two or three days, I beg that the first holiday after the masons, bricklayers, upholsterers, muses, and amanuenses are paid off, that somebody or other will tell me the society are well, and have not broke their necks off a scaffold, nor their bones by a fall from Pegasus.

By my little specimen in Strawberry, I guess that Nuneham is in the highest beauty. As a whole, summer has been spent on decorating autumn with verdure, leaves, and rivers. Your Lordship's Thames must be brimful. I never saw it such a Ganges at this time of year: it is none of your home-brewed rivers that people make with a drain, half a bridge, and a clump of evergreens, and then overlay with the model of a ship.

I know nothing, for I live as if I were just arrived from Syria, and were performing quarantine. Nobody dares stir out of their own house. We are robbed and murdered if we do but step over the threshold to the chandler's shop for

a pennyworth of plums. Lady Mary Mordaunt[1] is at Petersham with Lady Cecilia, and they are to dine here next week, if Admiral Milbank[2] is returned from the Baltic, and they can obtain a convoy. Dame Clivden is the only heroine amongst all us old dowagers: she is so much recovered that she ventures to go out cruising on all the neighbours, and has made a miraculous draught of fishes.

My nieces are gone to Hackwood[3], and thence are to meet their sister and Lord Chewton at Weymouth. I have heard a whisper of a little miscarriage: it must have been a very small one. The Duchess[4], when I heard last, was at Lausanne, but going to Geneva, and intended a visit to Madame de Virri, who is within three hours of the former. I do not know whither bound next.

Has your Lordship seen Mr. Tyrwhitt's book in answer to Mr. Bryant and Dr. Archimage[5]? It is as good as arguments and proofs can be after what is much better, wit and ridicule. As Mr. Mason is absorbed in *Fresnoy* and Associations, I conclude he does not condescend to look at such trifles as *Archæologic Epistles*, and dissertations on the language of Chaucer.

Charles Fox is languishing at the feet of Mrs. Robinson. George Selwyn says, 'Who should the *man of the people* live with, but with the *woman of the people*?' Tonton sends his compliments to Druid, and I am the whole sacred grove's devoted

H. W.

LETTER 2351.—[1] Lady Mary Anastasia Grace Mordaunt, second daughter of fourth Earl of Peterborough; succeeded her half-brother as Baroness Mordaunt in 1814, and died in 1816.

[2] Vice-Admiral (afterwards Admiral) Mark Milbanke (d. 1805), third son of Sir Ralph Milbanke, fourth Baronet, of Halnaby, Yorkshire. He was at this time in command under Howe.

[3] The Duke of Bolton's seat near Basingstoke.

[4] The Duchess of Gloucester.

[5] Dr. Milles, Dean of Exeter.

2352. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 8, 1782.

Two days after your letter by Cardini, I received yours of the 17th of last month, which you had written before that by him, but which, as you foresaw, his diligence would precede. I now write merely to answer what you say about Mozzi's business, for I do not know a tittle of news.

As the Cavalier is coming himself, I saw no cause of delivering his letter to Mr. Duane: however, as he had mentioned it to Sharpe, I did deliver it; and the next day received another from Sharpe, of Mozzi to him, with his own opinion, that I should either take the whole on myself, or accept of Mr. Duane. I confess, this shuffling did provoke me, and I have given it to Sharpe pretty roundly. I told him, that when I proposed Mr. Duane, he (Sharpe) would not consent, though Lucas had approved of him. I was glad thus to sow division between these two imps, or to detect Lucas if he had told a lie. I condemned Lucas's advising my Lord to contest so pitiful a part of his mother's will, I censured Lucas's delays, and exceedingly their having forced Mozzi to come over, to the great discredit of my Lord and his mother: and I concluded with telling Sharpe that I had almost always been unlucky in not having my ideas approved by him, or my Lord, or his lawyers, though when I had been permitted to act, I had proved my zeal and utility in my Lord's service. In short, Sharpe is not only a rogue but a fool, for this is not the first time that he has given me an opportunity of detecting him from his own mouth. I shall have distressed him and Lucas too, for they will not care to show my letter to my Lord, as it is a conviction of themselves. From him I expect no justice: but I will let him and them hear the truth

whenever I have an occasion. I never trouble myself about him or them but when they come across me, though the usage I have received from all would exasperate a cooler temper than mine.

To this moment my Lord[1] has not paid my brother or me a shilling of our fortunes, though bound by bond to pay us on his mother's death; nor sixpence of the interest, though due from the date of the bonds. When he sold the collection of pictures at Houghton, he declared at St. James's that he was forced to it, to pay the fortunes of his uncles—which amounted but to ten thousand pounds; and he sold the pictures for forty, grievously to our discontent, and without any application from us for our money, which he now retains, trusting that we will not press him, lest he should disinherit us, were we to outlive him. But we are not so silly as to have any such expectations at our ages; nor, as he has sold the pictures, which we wished to have preserved in the family, do we care what he does with the estate. Would you believe—yes, for he is a madman—that he is refurnishing Houghton; ay, and with pictures, too—and by Cipriani? That flimsy scene-painter is to replace Guido, Claude Lorraine, Rubens, Vandyke, Carlo Maratti, Albano, Le Sueur, &c., &c., &c.; and with subjects out of Homer and Dryden's Fables, selected and directed by his Lordship himself. But enough! it is madness to dwell on Bedlam actuated by attorneys!

I am perfectly ignorant of the state of the war abroad; they say we are in no pain for Gibraltar: but I know that we are in a state of war at home that is shocking. I mean, from the enormous profusion of housebreakers, highwaymen, and footpads; and, what is worse, from the savage barbarities of the two latter, who commit the most wanton cruelties. This evil is another fruit of the American war. Having no

LETTER 2352.—[1] The Earl of Orford.

vent for the convicts that used to be transported to our late colonies, a plan was adopted for confining them on board of lighters for the term of their sentences. In those colleges, undergraduates in villainy commence Masters of Arts, and at the expiration of their studies issue as mischievous as if they had taken their degrees in law, physic, or divinity, at one of our regular universities; but, having no profession, nor testimonial to their characters, they can get no employment, and therefore live upon the public. In short, the grievance is so crying, that one dare not stir out after dinner but well-armed. If one goes abroad to dinner, you would think one was going to the relief of Gibraltar. You may judge how depraved we are, when the war has not consumed half the reprobates, nor press-gangs thinned the numbers! But no wonder—how should the morals of the people be purified, when such frantic dissipation reigns above them? Contagion does not mount, but descend. A new theatre is going to be erected merely for people of fashion, that they may not be confined to vulgar hours—that is, to day or night. Fashion is always silly, for, before it can spread far, it must be calculated for silly people; as examples of sense, wit, or ingenuity could be imitated only by a few. All the discoveries that I can perceive to have been made by the present age, is to prefer riding about the streets rather than on the roads or turf, and being too late for everything. Thus, though we have more public diversions than would suffice for two capitals, nobody goes to them till they are over. This is literally true. Ranelagh, that is, the music there, finishes at half an hour after ten at night; but the most fashionable set out for it, though above a mile out of town, at eleven or later. Well! but is not this censure being old and cross? were not the charming people of my youth guilty of equivalent absurdities? Oh, yes; but the sensible folks of my youth had not lost

America, nor dipped us in wars with half Europe, that cost us fifteen millions a year. I believe the Jews went to Ranelagh at midnight, though Titus was at Knightsbridge. But Titus demolished their Ranelagh as well as Jerusalem. Adieu!

2353. To the Earl of Buchan.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 15, 1782.

Though I have a very lame right hand, my Lord, at present, as I have had for some time, and which prevented my thanking your Lordship for the papers you was so good as to send me, I must write a few lines to acknowledge the honour of your last, and to assure you that I shall be ready to borrow Dr. Arbuthnot's picture for your painter as soon as Lord Bristol is in London. Whether he is in Suffolk or in Ireland at present I am ignorant.

I congratulate your Lordship on the acquisition of a valuable picture by Jameson. The *Memoirs* of your Society I have not yet received; but, when I do, shall read it with great pleasure, and beg your Lordship to offer my grateful thanks to the members, and to accept them yourself.

No literature appears here at this time of the year. London, I hear, is particularly empty. Not only the shooting season is begun, but, till about seventeen days ago, there was nothing but incessant rains, and not one summer's day. A catalogue, in two quartos, of the manuscripts in the British Museum, and which thence does not seem to contain great treasures, and Mr. Tyrwhitt's book on the Rowleian controversy, which is reckoned completely victorious, are all the novelties I have seen since I left town. War and politics occupy those who think at all—no great number neither; and most of those,

Letter 2353.—Incomplete in C.; now printed from original in possession of Mrs. Alfred Morrison.

too, are content with the events of the day, and forget them the next. But it is too like an old man to blame the age; and, as I have nothing to do with it, I may as well be silent and let it please itself. I am, with great regard, my Lord, yours, &c.

2354. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 17, 1782.

I had not time yesterday to say what I had to say about your coming hither. I should certainly be happy to see you and Lady Aylesbury at any time; but it would be unconscionable to expect it when you have scarce a whole day in a month to pass at your own house, and to look after your own works. Friends, I know, lay as great stress upon trifles as upon serious points; but as there never was a more sincere attachment than mine, so it is the most reasonable one too, for I always think for you more than myself. Do whatever you have to do, and be assured that is what I like best that you should do. The present hurry cannot last always. Your present object is to show how much more fit you are for your post[1] than any other man; by which you will do infinite service too, and will throw a great many private acts of good nature and justice into the account. Do you think I would stand in the way of any of these things? and that I am not aware of them? Do not think about me. If it suits you at any moment, come. Except Sunday next, when I am engaged to dine abroad, I have nothing to do till the middle of October, when I shall go to Nuneham; and, going or coming, may possibly catch you at Park Place.

I am not quite credulous about your turning smoke into gold[2]: it is perhaps because I am ignorant. I like

Letter 2354.—[1] Mr. Conway was now Commander-in-Chief. *Walpole.*

[2] Alluding to the coke ovens, for which Mr. Conway afterwards obtained a patent. *Walpole.*

Mr. Mapleton extremely; and though I have lived so long that I have little confidence, I think you could not have chosen one more likely to be faithful. I am sensible that my kind of distrust would prevent all great enterprises; and yet I cannot but fear, that unless one gives oneself up entirely to the pursuit of a new object, this risk must be doubled. But I will say no more; for I do not even wish to dissuade you, as I am sure I understand nothing of the matter, and therefore mean no more than to keep your discretion awake.

The tempest of Monday night alarmed me too for the fleet: and as I have nothing to do but to care, I feel for individuals as well as for the public, and think of all those who may be lost, and of all those who may be made miserable by such loss. Indeed, I care most for individuals; for as to the public, it seems to be totally insensible to everything! I know nothing worth repeating; and having now answered all your letter, shall bid you good night.

2355. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 20, 1782.

You are a very wayward brother, and were not I the sweetest-tempered angel upon earth, we should infallibly quarrel; you have broken your word and then grow sulky because you are in the wrong. I have tempted you and scolded you, and *agacé*'d you indirectly to no purpose, but I know how to punish you out of your own law-book, which orders one most charitably to heap coals of fire on those who are to blame. This suits my disposition, too, better than pouting, for I have so little time left that I am resolved not to throw any of it away upon ill-humour. So if your majestic silence is to last, the Lord knows why! you must be cross alone, for I shall appear at Nuneham next month

when I am summoned, and be as glad to see you as if you was the most reasonable person in the world.

The newspapers say that Mr. Stratford's play of *Lord Russell* has been offered and accepted at Drury Lane. I conclude, cut for the stage by Master Doctor Cumberland, who I know had taken it in hand. What a delicious potion must a bumper of red-hot lava smoking from Vesuvius be, when extinguished by a double quantity of the coldest aconite! But how can the royalist empiric have been able to convert a Whig bonfire into an illumination to the honour of majesty? Oh, yes, such things may be: I have seen such.

If you have a mind that this letter should be longer, you must suppose that the two following pages are filled with accounts of robberies and murders. I know enough, and know nothing else, but as half of them are lies, you may as well imagine them as read the inventions. The papers are so full of lies that I have lately proposed, as an economic plan, that every family should invent its own gazette. The housekeeper might give it out with the napkins in a morning, and it would serve for the day as well as what the newsman brings. I like this way too of giving you *charte blanche*, because it is an exact answer to your two or three letters which you have never written. Adieu!

2356. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 25, 1782.

I do not at all guess when this letter will set out; for I do not know when I shall have anything to put into it, except an answer to one or two points of yours of the 15th of this month, which I have received this morning so soon, that I suppose the east wind must have brought

it himself. I cannot tell why your nephew neglected so many posts; I neither believe him ill nor on the road to Florence, either of which I think I should have heard from Mrs. Noel: but I shall see her this evening at Twickenham Park, and will ask her. *My* nephew, who *is* going to you, has not so much reason for that journey. He was disappointed of preferment when Lord Shelburne, with whom he had connected himself, was made Secretary of State. However, Mr. Fox, who had the other seals, named Lord Cholmondeley for the embassy to Berlin. When those two ministers quarrelled, Lord Cholmondeley thought it became him to follow Mr. Fox, and resigned his unenjoyed post. This is what I have heard; for I have not seen him since the affair happened, nor am I of his privy council.

Cav. Mozzi is imprudent not to come hither. He asks what he is to do? Why, no doubt, ask some able lawyer what he should do—and then, offer or accept some reasonable compromise—which not granted, the law will be open to him. Sharpe denies positively having objected to Mr. Duane—it may, to be sure, have been a trick of Lucas; but having no opinion of either, I shall take care not to impute the roguery to either in preference to the other. Mr. Duane tells me that Sharpe says he wondered Cav. Mozzi employed him, knowing he is concerned for my Lord. I replied, it was not at all extraordinary that Mozzi should apply to Sharpe, who had been my Lady Orford's lawyer—but this shows how little he is the Cavalier's friend. I don't know whether I ever told you what I have also heard, that Sharpe was disappointed at the Countess's not leaving him a legacy. That will have made him jealous of her principal legatee. In short, Mozzi had better come over and put himself entirely into Mr. Duane's hands.

At night.

I have been at the Duchess of Montrose's. Mrs. Noel knew nothing of your nephew; but Miss Howe, who was there too, had a letter to-day from her sister, General Pitt's wife, who is at the camp at Cox Heath, and happened to say that your nephew was there the day before yesterday with the son and daughter of your brother Edward; so, t'other Sir Horace is neither ill nor on the road to you. I hope you know so from himself before this.

We are in no pain for Gibraltar. There are accounts of Lord Howe having passed Lisbon. We reckon that the Bourbonian princes[1] will have made but a foolish jaunt. Our rich fleet from the Baltic is arrived with all the stores we wanted. This is the sum total of our present news, and the relief of Gibraltar will probably be all we shall have this season. By the silence of new letters from New York, the fable of four colonies revolting from the Congress is quite annihilated. Everything is mighty quiet here; and as the Parliament does not meet till the very end of November, I shall probably have very little to tell you for the next two months.

I am not sorry that your influenza ended in a little gout, which will quite carry it off. I have great respect for the gout, though it has broken my limbs to pieces, like the rack; but it is like the Turk, it seldom

——bears a brother near the throne[2].

I am afraid it will not cure a famine. We expected one from a very different cause—from heat and drought. In this region of humidity never was so wet a summer as

LETTER 2356.—[1] The Comte d'Artois, brother of Louis XVI, and his cousin, the Duc de Bourbon, had joined the allied forces in order to witness the projected bombardment of Gibraltar, for which elaborate preparations had been made.

[2] 'Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne.'
Pope, *Prologue to Satires*, l. 189.

the present; but we had a parenthesis of fine weather for ten days, that housed most of the corn, of which there was plenty. Grass and leaves we have in such abundance, that our landscapes are even uncommonly luxuriant. Nebuchadnezzar, who used to eat his dominions, would here be the most opulent prince upon earth.

Our papers say Lady Hamilton is dead at Naples. I am very sorry for her; but I hope, as she was a good fortune in land, that Sir William loses nothing by her death. If you write to him, pray mention my concern.

30th.

My answers to your last would be so mouldy if I detained this any longer, that I determine to send it away. I might keep it back to the end of the week, by which time some account of Lord Howe and Gibraltar is expected; but that event may reach you before my letter could. I shall content myself if I am able to wish you joy; for I reckon Gibraltar in your department, especially as your vigilance and activity extend themselves to every possible duty that you can hook into your province.

2357. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Oct. 1, 1782.

So far from being your gazetteer, Madam, I believe I shall be nothing but your echo, for I can only repeat or reply to the paragraphs you send me. I know nothing new, nay, nor anything old that is new. Mr. Churchill and my sister have been with me; I made a little assembly for them, and lighted up my gallery, but the terrors of highwaymen are so prevalent that I could muster but two cribbage and one commerce table. If partridge-shooting is not turned into robber-shooting, there will be an end of all society!

I admire Lady Westmorland's delicacy in her toasts.

Indeed, I am so ignorant in the fashions of the world that *is* come, that I thought toasting was quite left off, except by the volunteers in Ireland, and by some of your parsons who probe venison, and calculate how many stone of fat will come to their share; but fashions alter! I should not wonder if it grew the *ton* to sell bargains.

I know not whether the episcopal Earl[1] had any hand in ordaining *Lord Russell* for the stage, but I conclude *Dr.* Cumberland had; at least I am sure he had undertaken to correct it. How curious must the produce be of frenzy steeped in laudanum!

Cecilia I did read, but, besides its being immeasurably long, and written in Dr. Johnson's unnatural phrase, I liked it far less than *Evelina*. I did delight in Mr. Briggs, and in the droll names he calls the proud gentleman, whose name I forget. Morris, too, is well, and Meadows tolerable, and Lady Something Something and Miss Something; but all the rest are *outrés*. The great fault is that the authoress[2] is so afraid of not making all her *dramatis personae* set in character, that she never lets them say a syllable but what is to mark their character, which is very unnatural, at least in the present state of things, in which people are always aiming to disguise their ruling passions, and rather affect opposite qualities, than hang out their propensities. The old religious philosopher is a lunatic, and contributing nothing to the story, might be totally omitted, and had better be so. But I am most offended at the want of poetical justice. The proud gentleman and his proud wife ought to be punished and humbled; whereas the wife is

LETTER 2357. — [1] The Earl of Bristol, who was also Bishop of Derry.

[2] Frances Burney (1752–1840), third daughter of Dr. Charles Burney. She became Second Keeper of the Robes to Queen Charlotte in 1786, a post which she resigned in 1791. In 1793 she married General d'Arblay, a French refugee, who died in 1818. Besides *Evelina* and *Cecilia* Madame d'Arblay also wrote *Camilla* (1796), *The Wanderer* (1814), and *Memoirs* of Dr. Burney (1832).

rather exhibited as an amiable character. To say the truth, the last volume is very indifferent.

The vindication of the Governor of Barbadoes was quite lost upon me, who had never interested myself in his story, nor even know of what he was accused. I am a prodigious economist of my memory, and never load it with details about people and things for which I do not care a straw. This is meant with no disrespect for your Ladyship's information, for which I am obliged, as you see it has furnished me with five lines; a great object in my present sterility! My barrenness is much increased by shutting my ears to politics, to which I never will listen more. I was accustomed to a flourishing free kingdom; I had extended my ideas to empire—I cannot contract them to a fragment of a bankrupt island which has gamed away its fortune, and learned all the tricks of a ruined gamester. We are totally degenerated in every respect, which I suppose is the case of all falling states. In what do we shine? Saving the respect that I have for youth, I do not think the present blossoms are entertaining. They may amuse themselves very well, but surely they are not ingenious nor contribute to enliven us. I think I could still be diverted, if the complexion of the times furnished matter; but I certainly cannot divert your Ladyship when my own mind stagnates for want of something to put it in motion.

Princess Amelie told Lady Margaret Compton two days ago, that Mr. Morrice had recovered the use of his legs: I don't know how her Royal Highness heard it.

I have now replied paragraph by paragraph to your letter, Madam, as if saying my catechism, and given reasons of the faith that is in me; but as good boys are commonly dull, perhaps you would prefer a correspondent that played truant, and told you a few fibs.

Have you seen in the papers the excellent letter of Paul

Jones to Sir Joseph Yorke? *Elle nous dit bien des vérités!* I doubt poor Sir Joseph cannot answer them! Dr. Franklin himself, I should think, was the author. It is certainly written by a first-rate pen, and not by a common man-of-war. The 'Royal George' is out of luck!

I have told a lie: the 'Royal George' is *in* luck. I have this minute received a letter from General Conway, with these words:—

'I have a piece of good news to tell you, which is the complete and entire defeat of the long-meditated attack on Gibraltar, which began on the 13th at 3 p.m., and before midnight all the famous floating batteries were either burnt or sunk by our red-hot balls. They lost, it is said, 1,500 men, but none of distinction named. They saved some in their own boats, and General Elliot some in those he sent out.'

Well, Madam, is not this General Elliot the old man of the mountain who destroyed enemies with his *feu grégeois*? It was very obliging too in him to enliven my tame letter by such a gay conclusion—if one is to smile at the destruction of 1,500 men! I did smile inwardly, for two persons came in as I was reading my letter; and, as I naturally said I hoped this event would facilitate peace, one of them said, 'It is very uncertain what effect it will have on the King (of Spain): he has a sort of head that may persist the more for a thing being impossible.' Now we must wait to see whether the combined fleets will be obstinate too and attack Lord Howe, or let him victual Gibraltar.

2358. To the Earl of Strafford.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 3, 1782.

I did think it long since I had the honour of hearing from your Lordship; but, conscious how little I could repay you with any entertainment, I waited with patience.

In fact, I believe summer correspondences often turn on complaints of want of news. It is unlucky that that is generally the season of correspondence, as it is of separation. People assembled in a capital contrive to furnish matter, but then they have not occasion to write it. Summer, being the season of campaigns, ought to be more fertile: I am glad when that is not the case, for what is an account of a battle but a list of burials? Vultures and birds of prey might write with pleasure to their correspondents in the Alps of such events; but they ought to be melancholy topics to those who have no beaks or talons. At this moment if I was an epicure among the sharks, I should rejoice that General Elliot has just sent the carcases of fifteen hundred Spaniards down to market under Gibraltar; but I am more pleased that he dispatched boats, and saved some of those whom he had overset. What must a man of so much feeling have suffered at being forced to do his duty so well as he has done! I remember hearing such another humane being, that brave old admiral, Sir Charles Wager, say that in his life he had never killed a fly.

This demolition of the Spanish armada is a great event: a very good one if it prevents a battle between Lord Howe and the combined fleets, as I should hope; and yet better if it produces peace, the only political crisis to which I look with eagerness. Were that happy moment arrived, there is ample matter to employ our great men, if we have any, in retrieving the affairs of this country, if they are to be retrieved. But though our sedentary politicians write abundance of letters in the newspapers, full of plans of public spirit, I doubt the nation is not sober enough to set about its own work in earnest. When none reform themselves, little good is to be expected. We see by the excess of highwaymen how far evils will go before any attempt is made

to cure them. I am sure, from the magnitude of this inconvenience, that I am not talking merely like an old man. I have lived here about thirty years, and used to go everywhere round at all hours of the night without any precaution. I cannot now stir a mile from my own house after sunset without one or two servants with blunderbusses. I am not surprised your Lordship's pheasants were stolen: a woman was taken last Saturday night loaded with nine geese, and they say has impeached a gang of fourteen housebreakers—but these are undergraduates; when they should have taken their doctor's degrees, they would not have piddled in such little game. Those regius professors the nabobs have taught men not to plunder for farthings.

I am very sensible of your Lordship's kindness to my nephew, Mr. Cholmondeley. He is a sensible, well-behaved young man, and, I trust, would not have abused your goodness. Mr. Mason writes to me, that he shall be at York at the end of this month. I was to have gone to Nuneham; but the house is so little advanced, that it is a question whether they can receive me. Mason, I doubt, has been idle there. I am sure, if he found no muses there, he could pick up none at Oxford, where there is not so much as a bedmaker that ever lived in a muse's family.

Tonton begs his duty to all the lambs, and trusts that Lady Strafford will not reject his homage.

I am ever her Ladyship's and your Lordship's
Most devoted humble servant,
HOR. WALPOLE.

2359. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 12, 1782.

An hour after I had sent my last to town for the Secretary's office, I received the account of the demolition of the Spanish

floating batteries at Gibraltar. There was no occasion for sending a postscript after my letter, as I was sure you must learn that great success before my relation could reach you, especially as our intelligence came from the Continent. We have heard nothing but confirmations of that shining advantage, and assertions that the combined fleets mean to dispute the wall with Lord Howe. He has been detained by adverse winds; but we depend on Elliot's being as firm as his rocks (which are all that are left of Gibraltar), to maintain them till he is relieved, or has nothing but his rocks left to eat. The winds, the only powers that have made a figure in this war, have been playing the devil: we have lost two men-of-war; and the Jamaica fleet, that were dispersed by a storm, are not all arrived. The enemies' have probably not fared better; for the winds, like the armed neutrality, mean no good to anybody.

This nothing is all I have to say; so must tarry till something happens. I am sorry our correspondence makes us resemble vultures that live upon carcases, and banquet when there is a notable destruction of the human species. Oh, I had rather it starved!

15th.

Our generals and admirals are very inattentive people! They seem to forget that our correspondence depends on them. Elliot and Lord Howe have not sent me a paragraph for you this fortnight. I have not a dish for your table, brother vulture! but a dozen Jamaica ships that have been cast away; and you are too much the representative of a royal eagle to be content with such vulgar food. A public minister cannot descend to feast on merchantmen. Well! if it is possible, you shall have an arm of the Comte d'Artois; or a leg of the Duke of Bourbon; or, which you would like better, on Mediterranean accounts, the heart of

Lord Heathfield

from a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds P.R.A.

the Duc de Crillon[1]! Apropos, I hear Sir William Draper persists in bringing General Murray to a court-martial; of which he probably will make nothing.

16th.

I have just received yours of September 28th, when you had not heard of the destruction of the floating batteries; though it had reached us on the 29th, and even me, who live ten miles out of the world, on the 30th. I was told yesterday, that in London the siege is believed to be raised[2]. I hope so, and that there will be no more massacres there; though it is thought that the combined fleets will fight Lord Howe—it is not my opinion; but what signifies making conjectures on what is past by this time one way or the other? I shall no longer wait for the event, but send this to town to-morrow, meagre as it is; as in justice to poor Cav. Mozzi I ought to answer immediately that part of your letter.

He is waiting in vain for an answer from Mr. Duane, for you had announced Cav. Mozzi's arrival in September so positively, that both Mr. Duane and I thought it would be to no purpose for him to write. I now do not know what he can write. My Lord's letter is so gross, indecent, and absurd, that I myself am disposed to declare that I am ashamed of him, and will have nothing more to do with that business. It is only from tenderness to Cav. Mozzi that I do not declare so immediately; though if he would approve of it, I would do so, and perhaps it would be advantageous for him that I did—but then he must come over and employ some stout lawyer, who will battle for him, and plead that *I* had found the whole proceeding against him so unjust, nugatory, and insulting, that I had refused to be a party against him—and he must produce my

LETTER 2359.—[1] The Duc de Crillon commanded at the abortive attack on Gibraltar.
[2] The siege was raised in Feb. 1783.

Lord's letter, in which he says Lucas deserves to be tossed in a blanket. A court of justice would deserve to be of the party, if it did not vindicate him against such usage.

I desire you will say all this to Cav. Mozzi—it is all I can do for him, and I owe it to him, as he is so scandalously treated. I do not believe that Lucas and Sharpe mean their own little profit—but I am convinced that they act in concert, and not from better motives. They think an Italian has no right to justice against an Englishman; and, as I told you, I am persuaded that Sharpe resents my Lady's not leaving him a legacy. Having detected him in one roguery, it is his fault if I suspect him of another. Cav. Mozzi must take a decided part, and execute his resolution whatever it shall be. He will, he sees, obtain nothing by decency and civility. Those are no arms against a lunatic and two knaves. If he prefers peace and injustice to a journey to England, he had better sell his claim to some rich lawyer, who will know how to combat the gang with their own weapons—but even that will be difficult unless the Chevalier comes over. My advice is, to come, sell his right, and revenge himself by selling it, and return as soon as he pleases. For myself, I own I know not how to bring myself to be an umpire for one of whose cause I have no opinion, *but am ready to declare that the indecency of my party's conduct makes me renounce it.* This sentence you will translate literally to Mozzi.

2360. To Earl Harcourt.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 23, 1782.

Mr. Mason (who, by the by, is grown too plump for a poet and patriot, on whom the constitutional as well as the *whole Castalian state* depends) has been here and brought me your Lordship's most kind invitation. I am afraid, my

dear Lord, I dare not accept it so late in the season, and in such wet weather. The spirit is willing, but the bones, I must not say the flesh, are weak. I am going to settle in town, not daring to stay even here in my own house, for fear of the damps bringing on the gout. I should not be able to resist walking out at Nuneham, or going into your new rooms, and the consequence would be encumbering you with an invalid for two months—so that I have still passions to conquer at sixty-five; and though I might not have resolution enough to subdue them on my own account, I can for your Lordship's and Lady Harcourt's sakes. If I have a next summer, I shall hope to enjoy all your improvements within doors and without.

Mrs. Clivden, I flatter myself, is really recovered, having had no relapse since I mentioned her last. She even partakes of the diversions of the carnival, which at Twickenham commences at Michaelmas, and lasts as long as there are four persons to make a pool. I am to go to her this evening to what she calls *only two tables*. I have preached against hot rooms, but the devil, who can conceal himself in a black ace as well as in an apple or a guinea, has been too mighty for me, and so, like other divines, when I cannot root out vice, I join in it.

Lady Cecilia I have not seen this age. The highwaymen have cut off all communication between the nearest villages. It is as dangerous to go to Petersham as into Gibraltar. I comfort myself with the Gothicity of the times. Is not it delightful not to dare stir out of one's own castle but armed for battle? However, I am so scrupulous an adherent to good old customs, that I intend to be knighted and shall appoint Mr. Raftor my esquire, who is as great a coward as Sancho Panza, and has more humour. As it is right too, according to Cervantes, to mistake the objects of one's fury, I know whom I intend to attack as a highway-

man, whom as a footpad, housebreaker, or assassin; and should I repeat the same ideas fifty times, I can justify myself by the same authority, and shall not want subjects.

Still, as even in this ferocious age I do not abandon all literary pursuits, I presume to send your Lordship a composition of my own, in that ingenious way that was last in vogue before martial glory quite expelled the muses. I mean *a charade*. The word is a French name—*la voici*. The first part is thine, the second part belongs only to the most fashionable people, and the whole belongs only to me[1].

Your Lordship's most devoted,

Hor. Walpole.

P.S. If your Lordship, nor Lady Harcourt, nor Miss Fauquier, nor Mr. Whitehead can guess the charade, as I conclude, I will lay a wager Druid can.

2361. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 23, 1782.

Don't imagine that I am going to tell you some great event—I do not know a tittle of news. This letter follows my last week's so suddenly only to correct it. I have seen Mr. Duane, and find that he has written to Cavalier Mozzi and consented to accept the arbitration with me. I think then that I must assent too, as the best chance for poor Mozzi's obtaining any kind of justice. They have used him so ill that I shall have less delicacy. I told Mr. Duane of my Lord's last indecent letter, and he will tell Sharpe of it: and as I shall soon be settled in London, I will let Lucas know more of my mind, if he does not amend his dilatoriness. Still I am clear that Cav. Mozzi would have done better if he had come over: but since nothing can persuade

Letter 2360.—[1] The answer is 'Tonton'—Horace Walpole's dog.

him, I cannot help it. I hope Mr. Duane's credit will have more weight, and that both Lucas and Sharpe will be afraid of him, though being of their profession and a mighty moderate man, he will not speak so plainly as they deserve.

Since I wrote last, I have received yours of October 5th, when you did not know the demolition of the Spanish floating batteries; which surprises me, as it happened on the 13th of September, and I had learnt it on the 30th, though certainly I take no trouble to get intelligence, but am here quite ignorant of all that passes. By the common newspapers I see that the raising of the siege is still believed, and that no account is received yet of Lord Howe[1], for which the public is as impatient as it is at present for anything; which is, because it is the chief object of the moment. The public does not fatigue its memory, or penetration, or anxiety, with aught beyond what is exactly before its eyes. I, in deference to the mode, and weary of having seen so much pass before mine for above sixty years together, have still greater indifference, as becomes me; and, since the nation cares so little about its own affairs, I do not think that a veteran half-superannuated has anything to do with them, and accordingly the echo suffices for me.

I smiled at my nephew the Earl's[2] giving you so good an account of my health. It is a true one; but he must have shot his knowledge of it flying; for he only saw me as our chaises passed each other, as he was going to take leave of his mother at Hampton Court: but do not mention this. When people come to me, they are welcome; when they

LETTER 2361.—[1] Howe left England on Sept. 11 in order to relieve Gibraltar. The Spanish admiral Cordova was in command of the allied fleets off Algeciras, but refrained from attacking Howe, who landed his stores between Oct. 16 and 19. On Oct. 20 both fleets were in line of battle eastward of the Straits, but no action followed. The allied fleets withdrew to Cadiz and Howe came home.

[2] The Earl of Cholmondeley.

stay away, they are welcome too: I make myself very easy about most things. When I was young, I had some unpleasant uncles: now I am old, I have not much joy in my nephews. Very possibly I am not a pleasant uncle to them, but at least I do not interfere with their pleasing themselves; and so, when we do meet, we are upon very good terms. I aim at nothing but perfect tranquillity; and am so fortunate, that, if nothing disturbs me, my own temper never does. I carefully avoid everything that can create any disquiet to me. Old folks are easily forgotten, if they will but have the sense not to put the world in mind of them. This is a favourite maxim of mine; I practise it very carefully, and I assure you it answers to my sovereign contentment. I find it one of the comforts of old age, that, if one has hoarded experience, one may live upon it very agreeably in one's latter time. One can execute one's maxims and good resolutions. In youth, our passions interpose and counteract them; but what hinders an old man from acting rationally, if he pleases? In truth, I think myself very happy: I have gout enough to serve as an excuse for anything I don't like to do, and I have health enough to allow me to do all I desire to do. I am not so infirm as to be a prisoner; I am grown indolent enough to think idleness palatable, and yet can and like to amuse myself. I perceive a gradual decay of my faculties; which perception, since it is well-founded, is a felicity, as ignorance of it might betray me into exposing myself; and I reflect with satisfaction, that, if my present ease should leave me, it cannot be for long.

I could have nothing else to say, when I have talked about myself for a whole page; but if to a friend of above forty years' standing a portrait of my wrinkles would be an acceptable present, why should not the picture of my mind be so? I think such a drawing one of the few things

desirable: I cannot interest myself about the young world. The small number of my remaining old friends, and the memory of the past, are my most delicious enjoyments. However, as your life is not chequered with so many solitary hours as mine, you may not have a taste for such reflections; and therefore, when I have the least article of news to send you, I will not forget that I am your gazetteer, and not your philosopher.

2362. To Earl Harcourt.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 29, 1782.

I must trouble your Lordship with one word more, to say how infinitely obliged I am by your goodness, and how ashamed at your putting yourself to any inconvenience on my account. I could not pardon myself were I not sure that I should be a greater encumbrance to you. I should either be confined, or running away for fear of being so, and I know there is nothing so troublesome as tormenting others with whims about one's health.

I had heard with concern the reports that Mrs. Mac. gave your Lordship, and almost wish I could shut my ears on that chapter. That ugly monkey, Lord Gr., was one of the most impertinent. We have had a sprig from the same bough lately in my neighbourhood, which I expect to see in the papers, though I believe a mere accident; but *Mrs. Coaxer*[1] (you will probably think I mean *Mrs. Vixen*) was in such a *consternation* that she published it wherever she went, though it was nothing but the chance firing of a pistol.

I believe I did not do complete justice to my own charade. After I had sealed my letter, I recollected that I had

Letter 2362.—[1] Apparently Mrs. Keppel (Walpole's niece). The incident alluded to is mentioned in the letter to Lady Ossory of Nov. 10, 1782.

omitted these words, 'and my whole, though *doubly thine*, belongs,' &c. I think it very important to set this right, as whatever relates to Tonton is the law and the prophets to me. I can prove it is not from self-vanity, for with equal scrupulousness I must reject your Lordship's compliment on my courage. I assure you I am no hero, but

A puny insect, shivering at a breeze.

I shall delight in Mason's altar-piece. Is the Levite who passed by at all like my Lord of York?

Adieu! My best Lord, forgive me, and be assured how very grateful I am for all your goodness to

Your most devoted,
H. Walpole.

2363. To the Earl of Hertford.

My dear Lord, Oct. 30, 1782.

I return you Lord Beauchamp's pamphlet; and since you ordered me and I promised to tell you my sincere opinion of it, I will; though I had rather not, as I do not love to take upon me to give advice.

It is certainly very well written for Lord Beauchamp's purpose and situation in Ireland—but I confess I think the less it is seen by any one but those to whom it is addressed the better. There does not seem to me to be an argument in it in favour of the freedom and independence of *Ireland*, that is not equally applicable to *America*. Those principles are eternal and unalterable—and will it not be asked, how they are true with regard to Ireland and were not so towards America? Will it not be asked whether Ireland has not asserted its own independence on infinitely less provocation than America? I think both countries

Letter 2363.—Collated with original in British Museum.

are in the right—but by what distinction can the cause of the one and the other be discriminated, except, as I said, by Ireland's cause being weaker than that of America?

I certainly am glad Lord Beauchamp declares so strongly in favour of liberty against prerogative. He never can grow an advocate for the latter, or his own pamphlet will be a terrible witness against him.

There is one point in which I do not agree with him. He mumbles the case of the Revolution too tenderly. Modern Tories want to make it an unique case; that is not true, for whenever oppression has driven a nation to vindicate their rights the case has happened. And I trust it will not be an unique case in futurity more than it was in past times—that is, which I doubt will happen, when any country shall be tyrannized—and though the servility of lawyers may have kept the precedent out of their books, thank God! it will not be forgotten. America has shown it was not.

I have no scruple of speaking thus freely to your Lordship—you know I have never varied in my principles, and I have lived to have the satisfaction of seeing those principles triumphant. Ireland by having adopted them will become a great and flourishing country; and nothing but the revival of them here can restore this island to any part of the splendour which it had acquired by pursuing them. Lord Beauchamp will do himself and his family honour by adhering to those principles, now incorporated with the constitution of Ireland. England is disgraced, is sunk, by having embraced the contrary despicable system. Allow me to add, that of all politicians a politician author is most bound to adhere to the principles he has professed in print, for even posterity in that case can call him to account, and his cotemporaries are not likely to wink at his contradictions. I confess it was to give Lord Beauchamp this useful

hint that I have taken the liberty of saying so much; and I am sure I cannot show my regard for him so honourably, as by saying anything that may do credit to his character. Anybody can flatter—nobody should; a friend, never.

I am, &c.

2364. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 2, 1782.

I RECEIVED your short dispatch by Pozzolini, and one since of the 12th of October, but having nothing new to tell you, and having written to you so often of late, I should not hurry my answer to the last, had I not seen Mr. Duane again, who came to me yesterday, but too late for me to write and save the post from town; nor can this set out these three days.

Sharpe has delivered to Mr. Duane Lucas's summary (a very superficial one indeed, nor more than an abstract) of my Lord's claims. The sums are not even cast up, a blank being left for interest. We did cast up the sums, which amount to 6,159*l.* The principal articles are demands of fines on renewing leases, which my Lord *ought* to have received and his mother *did*. These amount to 4,676*l.* The remainder are trifles to make weight. The whole are gratis dictums, and would take half a century to ascertain. My opinion is, that they had in *their fair consciences* set down that somehow or other my Lord should have 6,000*l.* I told you I had even heard that Lucas told one of my Lord's creditors that that was the sum his Lordship would get—very decent, when referred to referees, whose opinion they could not know before we had formed any! before even we had seen my Lord's demands! To prove how rightly I guessed, Sharpe has whispered to

Mr. Duane that it would be better for my Lord and Cav. Mozzi to divide the money in the hands of the banker and the steward—I asked Mr. Duane what that would be? He said from Sharpe too, about 12,000*l.*—The half is exactly the 6,000*l.* to which they have fitted their bill—the blank interest they probably mean to give up in compliment to any claims the Cavalier may have.

This is a most infamous proceeding, and before I proceed a step I shall give my opinion very roundly to Lucas. Mr. Duane will be settled in town in about a fortnight, when we shall take some steps. Were we to call on Lucas for documents of the demands (yet without which there is no entering into the discussion) ten lives longer than the rest of mine will be would not suffice. To compromise, no doubt, will be the only way, and as Mons. Mozzi desires that, I shall try it—but how?—not at the expense to him of 6,000*l.*, but by expressing how much I am scandalized, and by threatening to throw up the office of umpire unless they are reasonable. I shall determine nothing without advertising Cav. Mozzi, and giving him time to weigh what we agree on. You may communicate to him the necessary parts of this.

4th. The great news of the relief of Gibraltar by Lord Howe arrived this day se'nnight, and of the dispersion of the combined fleets by a storm, in which they lost two or three ships, and we none. This is a fine reproof to his Spanish Majesty's obstinacy. What pitiful beings are monarchs, when they knock their heads against winds and seas—yet even then, alas, they knock other heads too! There is something sublime in this little island, beset with foes, calmly dispatching its own safeguard to maintain such a distant possession. I do not desire a codicil with a victory, which must be dearly bought: there would be dignity enough in returning, after having performed the

intended service. For these two days, indeed, there has been the report of a battle much in our favour, though with the loss of six ships; but I hear it is not credited in London.

You are going to lose your neighbour, Lord Mountstuart: he is no farther off than Turin. They talk of some fracas of gallantry; but whether that was the cause, or politics, I am totally ignorant. I know nothing but what the newspapers tell me, or stragglers from town. Lord Northington is the successor[1]. I am little acquainted with him; but he is a decent, good sort of man.

You must not look on this as a letter, at least it is only so to Mozzi.

The Parliament will meet in three weeks; which must have some novelty, when the administration is a new one. I wish it may be as new by being pacific, and not talk of *one campaign more*. I do not forget how often I have ended my letters with wishes of peace—almost as frequently as Lord Chesterfield talks of *the graces*: however, peace must come sooner or later, which the graces never did to his cub.

2365. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 3, 1782.

Our mutual silence, Madam, has had pretty nearly the same cause, want of matter; for though my nominal wife, Lady Browne, has not left me like your Lord, I have led almost as uneventful a life as your Ladyship in your lonely woods, except that I have been for two days in town, and seen Mrs. Siddons[1]. She pleased me beyond my expecta-

Letter 2364.—[1] This was not the case.

Letter 2365.—[1] Sarah Siddons (1755–1831). She reappeared in London (after an unsuccessful engagement in 1775) as Isabella in Garrick's version of *The Fatal Marriage*.

tion, but not up to the admiration of the *ton*, two or three of whom were in the same box with me; particularly Mr. Boothby, who, as if to disclaim the stoic apathy of Mr. Meadows in *Cecilia*, was all bravissimo. Mr. Crawfurd, too, asked me if I did not think her the best actress I ever saw? I said, 'By no means; we old folks were apt to be prejudiced in favour of our first impressions.' She is a good figure, handsome enough, though neither nose nor chin according to the Greek standard, beyond which both advance a good deal. Her hair is either red, or she has no objection to its being thought so, and had used red powder. Her voice is clear and good; but I thought she did not vary its modulations enough, nor ever approach enough to the familiar—but this may come when more habituated to the awe of the audience of the capital. Her action is proper, but with little variety; when without motion, her arms are not genteel. Thus you see, Madam, all my objections are very trifling; but what I really wanted, but did not find, was originality, which announces genius, and without both which I am never intrinsically pleased. All Mrs. Siddons did, good sense or good instruction might give. I dare to say, that were I one-and-twenty, I should have thought her marvellous; but alas! I remember Mrs. Porter and the Dumesnil—and remember every accent of the former in the very same part. Yet this is not entirely prejudice: don't I equally recollect the whole progress of Lord Chatham and Charles Townshend, and does it hinder my thinking Mr. Fox a prodigy?—Pray don't send him this paragraph too.

I am not laying a courtly trap, nor at sixty-five projecting, like the old Duke of Newcastle, to be in favour in the next reign. My real meditations are on objects much more proper to my age. A letter I have just received from Lord Buchan informs me of, probably, much more splendid courts than

the little tottering ruined palace in St. James's Street. Somebody at Bath[2] (whose name I cannot read!) has made a telescope that magnifies a celestial object 6,450 times, by which he finds that the new planet (which I did not see in town like Mrs. Siddons) is 160 times bigger than our little football; and, as the inventor expects to improve his instrument much farther, I suppose the new planet will improve in proportion. Perhaps I do not talk like an optician or an astronomer; but think, Madam, what exquisite glasses the new planetarians must have, before they can have any idea of our existing at all! Well, but as those 160 times bigger folks may have remained in as profound ignorance as Sir Joseph Banks's friends or Captain Cook's, how clever is it in *us* invisible pismires to have invented telescopes and calculated *their* size! I have often asked myself whither the myriads that are continually swept from our earth are to be transported? Now, as human pride concludes that the universal system was made for little us, here is a receptacle large enough—at least, that planet may know of others within reach, and not above some millions of millions of miles off. Now stoop, Madam, as many millions of miles as all these distances make, and let us talk of Gibraltar. Oh, what an atom! how can one figure it little enough, compared with what we have been talking of? Common sense is lost in the immensity: I am forced to look at my window, and persuade myself that Richmond Hill is a large object, before I can dismount from the stirrups of the telescope, and talk the usual language of the world.

I am glad to hear so good an account of Hatfield from our Lord. I have been invited thither; but I have done

[2] Horace Walpole probably alludes to the discovery of the planet Uranus (or the 'Georgium Sidus') by William (afterwards Sir William) Herschel (1738–1822). The discovery was made at Bath in March 1781. Herschel removed to Datchet in Aug. 1782.

with terrestrial journeys. I have not philosophy enough to stand stranger servants staring at my broken fingers at dinner. I hide myself like spaniels that creep into a hedge to die; yet, having preserved my eyes and all my teeth, among which is a colt's, not yet decayed, I treated it and my eyes, not only with Mrs. Siddons but a harlequin farce. But there again my ancient prejudices operated: how unlike the pantomimes of Rich, which were full of wit, and coherent, and carried on a story! What I now saw was *Robinson Crusoe*: how Aristotle and Bossu, had they ever written on pantomimes, would swear! It was a heap of contradictions and violations of the costume. *Friday* is turned into Harlequin, and falls down at an old man's feet that I took for Pantaloon, but they told me it was *Friday's* father. I said, 'Then it must be *Thursday*,' yet still it seemed to be Pantaloon. I see I understand nothing from astronomy to a harlequin farce!

Your new visitor, I hope, Madam, has carried you to Drayton. It is a most venerable heap of ugliness, with many curious bits. There is a modern colonnade erected by Sir John Germaine, the pillars of which, according to his usual ignorance, were at first, as Lady Suffolk told me, set up with their capitals downwards, supposing them pedestals.

I condole your loss of an old servant; I know no more of Gibraltar than you have seen in the papers. My Russians did come to breakfast, but understood Strawberry so little, that I thought it never before was so much the nurse—

of Goths, of Alans, and of Huns.

I am very uncertain when I shall settle in London, but think I must in a fortnight, when Mr. Duane will. He replaces Mr. Morrice for Cav. Mozzi. Mr. Bull, whom I

saw in town, tells me poor Morrice is not at all better and thinks of Naples. I direct to Ampthill.

P.S. Lord Buchan, who tells me a vast deal about *our* Antiquarian Society at Edinburgh, and generally asks me many questions about past ages, has sent me two franks, that my knowledge may cost him no more than it is worth. Does your Ladyship know that Lord Monboddo has twice proposed to Mrs. Garrick? She refused him; I don't know whether because he says in his book that men were born with tails, or because they have lost them.

The following is an extract (I think you will like it) from a letter of Lord Mansfield to Monsieur Limon, who, Gerbier[3] being ill, pleaded and carried the cause of Miss Hamilton against Parson Beresford, and sent his *plaidoyer* to his Lordship. 'Vous avez pris, Monsieur, le rôle destiné à Monsieur Gerbier, et vous l'avez remplacé. On ne s'est point aperçu de l'absence d'Atlas, quand le fardeau a été soutenu par Hercule.'

The French, I conclude, Lord Stormont's; and the thought too perhaps—it is *pensé à la françoise.*

I have seen the *plaidoyer*; it begins with setting forth that Mr. Hamilton, the father of Miss, is in the line of succession to the crown of Scotland; and in three lines more I found that this Scottish princess lived at Pinner—a village vulgar enough for so highborn a heroine!

2366. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 5, 1782.

I had begun a letter in answer to another person, which I have broken off on receiving yours, dear Sir. I am exceedingly concerned at the bad account you give of your-

[3] Probably Pierre Jean-Baptiste Gerbier (1725–1788), a well-known French barrister.

self, and yet, on weighing it, I flatter myself that you are not only out of all danger, but have had a fortunate crisis, which I hope will prolong your life. A boil surmounted is a present from nature to us, who are not boys—and though you speak as weary of life from sufferings, and yet with proper resignation and philosophy, it does not frighten me, as I know that any tumour and gathering, even in the gum, is strangely dispiriting.

I do not write merely from sympathizing friendship, but to beg that if your boil is not closed or healing, you will let me know; for the bark is essential, yet very difficult to have genuine. My apothecary here, I believe, has some very good, and I will send you some directly.

I will thank you, but not trouble you with an account of myself. I had no fit of the gout, nor any new complaint; but it is with the utmost difficulty that I keep the humour from laming me entirely, especially in my hands, which are a mine of chalk-stones, but, as they discharge themselves, I flatter myself they prevent heavier attacks.

I do take in the *European Magazine*, and think it in general one of the best. I forgot what was said of me—sometimes I am corrected, sometimes flattered—and care for neither. I have not seen the answer to Mr. Warton, but will send for it.

I shall not be sorry on my own account if Dr. Lort quits Lambeth, and comes to Saville Row, which is in my neighbourhood—but I did not think a wife was the stall where he would set up his staff.

You have given me the only reason why I cannot be quite sorry that you do not print what you had prepared for the press. No kind intention towards me from you surprises me—but then I want no new proofs. My wish, for whatever shall be the remainder of my life, is to be quiet and forgotten. Were my course to recommence, and

could one think in youth as one does at sixty-five, I have no notion I should have courage to appear as an author. Do you know, too, that I look on fame now as the idlest of all visions? but this theme would lead me too far.

I collect a new comfort from your letter. The *writing* is much better than in most of your latest letters. If your pain were not ceased, you could not have formed your letters so firmly and distinctly. I will not say more, lest I should draw you into greater fatigue. Let me have but a single line in answer.

Yours most cordially,
H. W.[1]

2367. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Nov. 5, 1782.

I beg your Ladyship's pardon, but I cannot refrain from sending you a codicil to my last. I have taken to astronomy, now the scale is enlarged enough to satisfy my taste, who love gigantic ideas—do not be afraid; I am not going to write a second part to *The Castle of Otranto*, nor another account of the Patagonians who inhabit the new Brobdingnag planet; though I do not believe that a world 160 times bigger than ours is inhabited by pigmies—they would do very well for our page, the moon.

I have been reading Lord Buchan's letter again. He tells me that Mr. What-d'ye-call-him, at Bath, says that the new planet's orbit is eighty of our years. Now, if their days are in proportion to their year, as our days are to our year, a day in the new planet must contain 1,920 hours; and yet, I dare to say, some of the inhabitants complain of the shortness of the days. I may err in my calculations, for I am a woful arithmetician, and never could learn my

Letter 2366.—[1] Cole died on Nov. 16, 1782.

multiplication table; but no matter, one large sum is as good as another. How one should smile to hear the Duchess of Devonshire of the new planet cry, 'Lord! you would not go to dinner yet, sure! it is but fifteen hundred o'clock!' or some Miss,—'Ah! that superannuated old fright, I'll lay a wager she's a year old.' But stay; here I don't go by my own rule of proportion, I ought to suppose their lives adequate to their size. Well, any way, one might build very entertaining hypotheses on this new discovery.

The planet's distance from the sun is 1,710,000,000 of miles—I revere a telescope's eyes that can see so far! What pity that no Newton should have thought of improving instruments for hearing too! If a glass can penetrate 1,710,000,000 of miles beyond the sun, how easy to form a trumpet like Sir Joshua Reynolds's, by which one might overhear what is said in Mercury and Venus, that are within a stone's-throw of us! Well, such things will be discovered—but alas! we live in such an early age of the world, that nothing is brought to any perfection! I don't doubt but there will be invented spying-glasses for seeing the thoughts—and then a new kind of stucco for concealing them; but I return to my new favourite, astronomy. Do but think, Madam, how fortunate it is for us that discoveries are not reciprocal. If our superiors of the great planets were to dabble in such minute researches as we make by microscopes, how with their infinitely greater facilities, they might destroy us for a morning's amusement! They might impale our little globe on a pin's point, as we do a flea, and take the current of the Ganges or Oroonoko for the circulation of our blood—for with all due respect for philosophy of all sorts, I humbly apprehend that when people wade beyond their sphere, they make egregious blunders—at least we do, who are not accustomed to them.

I am so vulgar, that when I hear of 17,000,000 of miles, I fancy astronomers compute by livres like the French, and not by pounds sterling—I mean, not by miles sterling. Nay, as it is but two days that I have grown wise, I have another whim. I took it into my head last night that our antediluvian ancestors, who are said to have lived many hundred years, were not inhabitants of this earth but of the new planet, whence might come the account which we believe came from heaven. Whatever came from the skies, where the new planet lives, would, in the apprehension of men at that time, be deemed to come from heaven. Now, if a patriarch lived ten of their years, which may be the term of their existence, and which according to our computation make 800 of our years, he was pretty nearly of the age of Methusalem; for what signifies a fraction of an hundred years or so?—Yet I offer this only as a conjecture; nor will I weary your Ladyship with more, though I am not a little vain of my new speculations.

Apropos to millions, have you heard, Madam, of the Prince de Guéméné's breaking for 28,000,000 of livres? Would not one think it was a debt contracted by the two Foleys? I know of another Prince de Guéméné, who lived, I think, early in the reign of Louis Quatorze, and had a great deal of wit. His wife was a *savante.* One day, he met coming out of her closet an old Jew (not such as the present Prince and the Foleys deal with, but) quite in rags, and half stark. The Prince asked who he was? The Princess replied scornfully, 'Mais il me montre l'hébreu.'—'Eh bien,' said the Prince, 'et bientôt il vous montrera son cul.'—I hope this story, if you did not know it, will make amends for the rest of my rhapsody.

2368. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 10, 1782.

I am very happy that my illustrations of the new planet, which you call anonymous, amused your Ladyship and Lady Anne for a moment in our Lord's absence; but I do not intend to overload you with them; I assure you the inventor has christened it *the Georgian*[1]—whether in imitation of the constellation named *Charles's Wain*, or to console his Majesty with new dominions in lieu of those he has lost, I do not know. I was happy to be *planet-struck*, as you so properly call it; for having totally abandoned politics and authorship, I catch at any whim that will occupy me for a day or two and stop a gap in my correspondences. Lord Ossory asks very reasonably why I correspond with Lord Buchan—because I cannot help it now and then: I am his Tom Hearne, and he *will* extract from me whatever in the course of my antiquarian dips I have picked up about Scottish kings and queens, for whom in truth I never cared a straw. I have tried everything but being rude to break off the intercourse; and sometimes go as near the line as I can by smiling. My last answer was of that kind: I humbly pointed out an error of the press in the first number of the *Memoirs* of their Society which he sent me. On the reverse of a medal of their vestal martyr, Queen Mary, they have printed *Satyr* for *Saltyr*—and I terrified myself lest it should be construed into an intended aspersion!

My last diversion has been of a different nature from star-gazing. Mrs. Hobart, last Friday, invited me to her play, at Ham Common. I went, because Mr. Conway and Lady Aylesbury, and Mrs. Damer, were for that purpose at Lady Cecilia Johnstone's, and I had not seen them for an

Letter 2368.—[1] The 'Georgium Sidus.'

age. I was extremely pleased, especially with the afterpiece. The play was *All in the Wrong*[2], and a vile thing it is: there are three couple, all equally jealous, with no discrimination of character. It is like two looking-glasses that reflect each other without end. Mrs. Hobart played admirably, and most genteelly, which was very refreshing, as one never sees anything like a woman of fashion on the stage. Her three daughters[3] all did well. A Mr. Fury is cried up as a miracle: he was not so in my eyes. Col. Gardner, who is not liked, was, I thought, little inferior, yet but middling; but in *The Guardian*[4] all was perfect. The eldest Miss Hobart, so lovely and so modest, was not acting, she was the thing itself. There was an Irish Mr. Arabin, from Sir William East's[5] theatre, incomparable in the uncle. His own brogue added exceedingly, and a Colonel Tims, being a very well-looking man, and playing most justly, made the story very probable.

There was a great deal of good company collected from the environs, and even from London, but so armed with blunderbusses that when the servants were drawn up after the play, you would have thought it had been a midnight review of conspirators on a heath. There were Lord and Lady North and their family, the Seftons, Lucans, Duncannons, Lady Maries Coke and Lowther, Lords Graham and Palmerston, Lady Bridget Tollemache and her sister, the T. Pitts, and the two Storers. There, too, I saw Mrs. Johnston[6], the Portugu-Englishwoman, that was called such a beauty: she is a fine figure, but not handsome, though too good for such a brutal swine.

[2] A comedy by Arthur Murphy.

[3] Albinia, m. (1784) Richard Cumberland, son of the dramatist; Henrietta, m. (1789) John Sullivan; Maria, m. (1785) Hon. George Augustus North (afterwards third Earl of Guilford).

[4] A comedy by Garrick.

[5] First Baronet, of Hall Place, Maidenhead; d. 1819.

[6] Charlotte, *née* Dee, wife of Governor Johnstone.

You are very kind about my nieces, Madam; but I do not believe there was the least intention of hurt to them. The gentlemen were cleaning their pistols at the window of the Toy[7], and discharged them as the girls were going by. Mrs. Keppel took an alarm; and much less falling on such a soil as Hampton Court will bring forth lies an hundredfold. Lady Chewton looked remarkably well at her return from Weymouth; I know nothing of her since.

Berkeley Square, 12th.

I had begun this letter at Strawberry on Sunday night, just before I went to bed: my *réveil* was shocking; an express brought me news of the death of Lady Hertford! I truly loved her, she had been invariably kind to me for forty years. She had been seized on the preceding Sunday with a violent cough and spitting of blood, and left Ditton on the Tuesday for fear of being confined in that damp spot, which has been her death. Lady Aylesbury saw her on Friday morning and thought her very ill, and I had determined to come to her yesterday morning, but heard the cruel event before I could set out; it was an inflammation in her bowels, but as on Friday she had had no physician, I could not conceive her in danger. The moment I arrived I sent to know if Lord Hertford would see me; he said he would in the evening. I went, but met his son Henry in the hall, who said his father could not bear the interview. Alas! this was a relief to me: I had amassed resolution to go, as it was right I should, but I behaved so wretchedly at the sight of the son, that it was well I did not see the father! His loss is beyond measure[8]. She was

[7] A tavern at Hampton Court.

[8] Lord Hertford's letter to Horace Walpole on this occasion runs as follows:—

'Dear Horry,

'With a dagger in my heart which nothing in this world now can extract, I am determined to exert all my feeble power to tell you, who loved my dearest and beloved Lady Hertford, that I am upon the point of losing her, the best woman, the

not only the most affectionate wife, but the most useful one, and almost the only person I ever saw that never neglected or put off, or forgot anything that was to be done. She was always proper, either in the highest life or in the most domestic. Her good humour made both sit easy; to herself only she gave disquiet by a temper so excessively affectionate. In short, I was witness to so many virtues in her, that after my Lord and her children, I believe nobody regrets her so sincerely as I do. Her house was one of my few remaining habitudes; but those drawbacks on long life make its conclusion less unwelcome!

2369. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 10, 1782.

I do not know whether you are like those auctioneers who put up a lot at an extravagant rate, and then, if it sells but for what it is worth, cry, 'It is given away.' I, if my footman goes on a message and executes it, am content; I don't desire he should have threshed another footman and spoiled his own livery. Lord Howe has relieved and victualled Gibraltar, has been attacked by the combined fleets, who did not admire his reception of them; made him a bow and retired; and he is coming home without the loss of a wherry. I like this better than if he had sent home the mainmast of the Admiral's ship to be hung up in Westminster Hall with the standards of Blenheim, and had lost two or three first-rates. The Romans, who had some sense—sometimes—that is, when they thought as I do, loved to be obeyed *au pied de la lettre*. I don't say but Lord Howe had a plenary indulgence for demolishing both squadrons, if he could; but

best friend, and best wife that ever existed.

'Do not make me any answer and pity me. I am not able to bear even the condolence of a friend.

'Yours, dear Horry,

'Hertford.

'London, Nov. 10, 1782.'

is not there more grave dignity in marching in face of a very superior navy, maintaining a fortress on their own coast, engaging that navy, obliging it to retire, and walking home himself very deliberately? Add, the vexation of that obstinate mule the King of Spain, and the ridiculous flippancies of the Bourbon princes, and there appears to me ten times more majesty in such sedate triumph than in a naval victory. Superior armies and fleets have been beaten by inconsiderable numbers; but, when a multitude are baffled by a handful after a mere skirmish, glory has no true taste if she does not range herself on our side.

As I am of an age to have made a league with all the sober virtues, I would behave temperately on this occasion, and still condescend to offer peace.

Western Europe has, upon the whole, made but a foolish figure of late, either in policy or arms. *We* have flung away men, money, and thirteen provinces. *France* has been spiteful, to gain nothing but the honour of mischief. Spain has been bombastly unsuccessful, and Holland has betrayed imbecility in every light. Dr. Franklin may laugh at *us*; but surely he cannot reverence his allies.

Berkeley Square, 12th.

I am come to town on a very melancholy occasion. Lady Hertford died the night before last of an inflammation in her bowels, after an illness of only eight days[1]. Her loss to my Lord is irreparable, a considerable one to society, and to me a very sensible one. She was not only an incomparable wife, but conducted all the affairs of so numerous a family herself; in short, she had every domestic virtue and a

LETTER 2369.—[1] Lady Isabella Fitzroy, youngest daughter of Charles, second Duke of Grafton, and wife of Francis Seymour Conway, first Earl of Hertford of that line; by whom she had seven sons and six daughters, who all lived to be men and women. She was Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Charlotte. *Walpole.*

thousand good qualities. To me she had at all times been kind and obliging. I had lived a great deal with her, and it was one of the few houses on which I reckoned for my remaining time. It will make a great chasm, as I do not either seek or encourage new acquaintance—and almost all the old are gone! It is difficult to stop, when commonplace reflections crowd on one's thoughts and mix with one's sensations; but it would not be just to moralize to *you*, because *I* feel. You knew not poor Lady Hertford; and therefore every one that drops would be as fit a subject to preach upon.

2370. To Earl Harcourt.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 12, 1782.

I am certainly little worthy of the great honour you do me, my best Lord, but I should be utterly unworthy of it were I to give myself airs of intelligence, or presume to give you advice when I am totally in the dark. I have not the least idea of what is to be the subject of the opening. My ignorance of what is passing is extreme, for I do not even ask a question. By the violence with which the old ministers or their dependents rave against the independence of America, Lord Shelburne, perhaps, expects great opposition. If he does, he cannot have concluded a treaty with them, and unless they oppose him, who is to be apprehended in the House of Lords? The promotion of Jenkinson I have only seen in the newspapers, or from those who saw it there.

Should I, which is not likely, hear what the specific business is, I will undoubtedly acquaint your Lordship. At this moment, I own, my head, which has entirely forsworn politics, is not very capable of attending to them. I have lost, and very suddenly, poor Lady Hertford, whom I sincerely loved and valued, and who has in all times treated

me most kindly for forty years. Her loss to her husband and family is irreparable. I feel for them, but I confess I feel the loss to myself too, heavily. I knew all her great and good qualities, and time and accidents have reduced my friends to so very small a number, that I neither seek, nor am likely to find, a succedaneum of equal merit.

I beg pardon for talking of my own griefs, when I ought only to reply to your Lordship. Why should you not come for a day and judge for yourself? Nobody has authority to retain you. Surely your Lordship is independent and unhampered, if any man is! Should the business be to approve American independence, I think you would be sorry not to give your vote for it. Excuse my saying no more, for my heart is full, yet though of the dead. I can never forget how much I ought to be and am, &c.

2371. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 16, 1782.

Your Ladyship, as ever, is good to me both in inviting and in excusing me. Could I wait on you, the great misfortune of losing poor Lady Hertford should not detain me; for as Lord Hertford will be in Suffolk, I could be of no use to him; and to be at Ampthill would be much more agreeable than to be in London, where I have lost the house to which for forty years I went the oftenest—but to London I must go on Monday on different businesses. One is to meet Lord Orford's lawyers with Mr. Duane, whom I have obtained to replace Mr. Morrice as referee for the suit between my Lord and his mother's residuary legatee[1], who has been treated scandalously, and put off to this moment. I have another affair to settle with the children of Mr.

Letter 2371.—[1] The Cavaliere Mozzi.

Bentley[2], who is dead, and for whom (the children) I have placed a very small sum in the funds, which I am now to transfer to them. I will say nothing of myself, though, without being confined, I cannot at present take a journey. I should be very glad to meet Lady Chewton, whom I have not seen a great while. I do hear she is very well, but grown extremely thin.

Lord Hertford, I am certain, will be extremely sensible of your Ladyship's attention. Any mark of regard for Lady Hertford's memory will be dear to him. Every word he utters is an encomium on her. Indeed, his grief is as rational as it is deep; it is an uninterrupted funeral sermon on her. Yet, though he is so devout, it was not tinged with any of the commonplace litanies, with which pious people often colour their want of feeling. His concern is too sincere and too desponding to use any expressions that are not genuine. Lady Hertford was his wife, friend, clerk, and steward, and was as active as she was attached. Her affection and zeal attended to everything, and her good sense made everything easy to her; but I forget, and am indulging my own sensations, while I meant only to do justice to those of Lord Hertford.

I hope Lord Ossory adjusted the squabbles of his regiment to his satisfaction.

P.S. As I was going to seal this, I received your Ladyship's second kind note. I wish the character could comfort Lord Hertford, but it is no momentary satisfaction that can close such a wound which every incident that reminds him of his loss will open. It is justice to him to tell you that the very morning Lady Hertford expired his first thought was to have this tribute paid to her. I found a note from

[2] Richard Bentley the younger, Horace Walpole's former correspondent, died in Abingdon Street, Westminster, in Oct. 1782.

him on my table in town, which I could scarce read, to beg it, and in an hour he wrote again. It is as just to her to say, that they were my immediate thoughts, and consequently the true; that I set them down, transcribed and carried them at seven that evening, and gave them to his son Henry, when my Lord was not able to see me himself—thus your Ladyship sees there could be no art, study, or preparation in them. Lady Lucan has just called and told me what I am very sorry for too, though in no proportion,—that Sir Joshua Reynolds has had a stroke of palsy. I finish, lest I should moralize.

2372. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 26, 1782.

You will be impatient to learn the event of this day, on which depended the horoscope of the present administration. I shall not be sorry if you should hear from France, before you receive this, that an era of much more importance to mankind than the fate of a minister had intervened. But, to waive riddles; on Saturday last, it was declared that the Parliament, which was to meet to-day, was put off to the fifth of next month; by which time the ministers hoped to be able to declare whether the Peace would be made or was desperate. Our ultimatum went some days ago to Paris: I don't know what it is; therefore I devoutly hope it will be accepted. I look to the scale in which lives are, and not to that of glory; and wish the reality may outweigh the smoke, as it ought to do.

You have seen, I suppose, in the newspapers, the articles preferred against General Murray by Sir William Draper, who has certainly attacked his weak side, his judgement. It threatened to be a most tedious trial: it is interrupted, at least for the present, by Draper's falling ill. Probably, I

should not have known so much as this, had I not thought *you* would be curious. I have long determined not to concern myself with courts-martial, which I do not understand; and it is unjust for so ignorant a person to pronounce on men whose honour is at stake: were a lawyer to be tried, his character is of no consequence; at worst he could be made a peer. Physicians, though they commit more deaths than soldiers, never are tried; and for divines, it would be idle, for they expound their own laws as they please, and always in their own favour.

I began this letter, for this was-to-have-been important day, two days ago, but I am not able to finish it myself. I suppose I caught cold on my coming to town, for in three days I was seized with the gout, and have it now from the top of my left shoulder to the ends of my fingers—but enough of that. I have told you before of the savage state we are fallen into: it is now come to such perfection, that one can neither stir out of one's house safely, nor stay in it with safety. I was sitting here very quietly under my calamity on Saturday night, when, at half an hour after ten, I heard a loud knock at the door. I concluded that Mr. Conway or Lady Aylesbury had called after the Opera to see how I did; nobody came up; a louder knock. I rang to know who it was; but, before the servants could come to me, the three windows of this room and the next were broken about my ears by a volley of stones, and so were those of the hall and the library below, as a hint to me how glad I must be of my Lord Rodney's victory six or eight months ago. In short, he had dined at the London Tavern with a committee of the Common Council; for the Mayor and Aldermen had refused to banquet him. Thence he had paraded through the whole town to his own house at this end, with a rabble at his heels breaking windows for not being illuminated, for which no soul was prepared, as no

soul thought on him; but thus our conquerors triumph! My servants went out and begged these Romans to give them time to light up candles, but to no purpose; and were near having their brains dashed out. I did not know that my windows were either French or Spaniards; but glaziers and tallow-chandlers always treat sashes as public enemies. As next day was Sunday, I expected to remain in a temple of the winds; but my glazier at least had the charity to repair the mischief that perhaps he had done.

Your sister-in-law, Mrs. Mann[1], was robbed about ten days ago in New Park, between three and four in the afternoon; the prudent matron gave the highwayman a purse with very little money, but slipped her watch into the bag of the coach. The cavalier, not being content, insisted on more. The poor girl, terrified, gave him not only her own pinchbeck watch, but her grandmother's concealed gold one; for which, no doubt, she will undergo many a supernumerary lecture on economy and discretion, and the Christian duty of cheating highwaymen. Adieu! for I am weary, and can dictate no more: but, indeed, I have nothing more to say.

P.S. I expect to hear of Mr. Duane every day; but God knows whether I shall be able to do any business with him yet, for the gout is come into five places already: poor Mozzi should have younger labourers in his vineyard than Mr. Morrice and me.

2373. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 27, 1782.

Alas! I am totally incapacitated for being your gazetteer: you see I cannot pen my newspaper myself, nor see people

Letter 2372.—[1] The widow of Mr. Galfridus Mann. *Walpole.*

to tell me news, nor have I scarce voice enough to dictate if I knew any. In short, I have the gout in five places without reckoning subdivisions of fingers: moreover, I have a higher fever than usual; so that if the gout does not kill me, perhaps one of his hussars may. I had been in town but three days when I was seized, and have grown much worse ever since, yet not having had much pain, my patience is not exhausted.

As I am no stock-jobber, I have not calculated my own belief about peace or war: I wait for my apothecary with more earnestness than for the decisive courier. All factions I suppose are as much at bay, though probably with far less indifference. I wish the world well, and therefore desire peace; but what have I to wish but not to suffer? I shall not send this away till to-morrow, that if I should have a tolerable night, which will be my first, I may tell you so.

26th.

I have had a quiet night and very little fever to-day, and hope my disorder has taken a favourable turn.

2374. To Earl Harcourt.

My best Lord, Berkeley Square, Nov. 28, 1782.

You are so very kind that I must obey you, though I hold it very idle to trouble anybody with the details of my decay. I have indeed for a little while been extremely ill, and much worse with its fever than with the gout itself, though I have that in five places. Philip told before dinner that he saw I was better, for I had taken up a book, which I had not done for six days. Thus, my dear Lord, I have complied with your injunction, but I do not intend to make a practice of it, for the gout is such a tiresome old story, that it is not fit anybody should be plagued with it

but those who must endure it, never those who have so much sensibility as your Lordship.

I have just received a most kind and pleasing letter from Lady Maria[1], who is so charmed with the improvements at Nuneham, though it snowed all day, that she seems to think

That Paradise was open'd in the wild.

I beg your Lordship to tell her that I will write to her as soon as I am able, but I cannot even dictate now for any time. I hear poor Lady Waldegrave[2] is extremely ill, which is all I know, not having been able to see anybody till to-day. Adieu, my good Lord, and be assured that while I have breath,

I shall be, &c.

2375. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 29, 1782.

The hand[1] tells your Ladyship that I cannot write my own: I have been extremely ill; in point of fever, I think, worse than I ever was; for though I have the gout in five places, I have had but little pain. I trust the disorder is turned; for I am so low to-day that the fever must be in a manner gone, and I have no new pain anywhere; therefore your Ladyship will be so good as not trouble yourself about my gout, which will cure itself in due time.

It was not pleasant, when I was so ill, to have all my windows broken for that vain fool Rodney, who came out of his way to extend his triumph.

I am very happy, Madam, with what you say of Lady Chewton. She is an extremely good young woman, of

Letter 2374.—[1] Lady Maria Waldegrave.
[2] Elizabeth Leveson-Gower, Countess Waldegrave.

Letter 2375.—[1] That of Kirgate, Horace Walpole's secretary and printer.

a very grave turn, and extreme sensibility; she very seldom is in high spirits, but always more affected by sorrow than joy. I had a note from her this morning, and expect to see her, and I hope Lord Chewton, to-morrow. I have heard that Lady Waldegrave is very ill, but that my Lord was returned from Bath much better.

I have been so entirely shut up for this week that I know nothing, and my voice is too weak to dictate much if I did. As I take a great many killings, more than a Hercules, I shall probably be well again in a few days, and able to write myself.

2376. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Monday evening, Dec. 2, 1782.

The day that I little expected to live to see is arrived! Peace[1] came this morning: thank God! That is the first thought: the effusion of human gore is stopped, nor are there to be more widows and orphans out of the common course of things.

What the terms are will be known before this goes away to-morrow: they may be public already; but here am I, lying upon a couch and not out of pain, waiting with patience for what I shall learn from the few charitable that I am able to admit. Proud conditions I, nor even you in your representative dignity, can expect. Should they be humiliating, *they* ought to answer who plunged us into a quadruple war, and managed it deplorably for seven years together!

As I have not breath to dictate much, I shall not waste myself on a single reflection: but in truth I am very low;

Letter 2376.—[1] The Preliminary Articles of a Peace to be concluded between Great Britain and the United States were signed at Paris on Nov. 30, 1782.

and what are all the great and little affairs of the world to me, who am mouldering away, not imperceptibly!

Just now I received yours of the 16th of November, chiefly on the affairs of Gibraltar; you will find how details on that place, like your preceding occupation for Minorca, will be absorbed in subsequent events.

To Cav. Mozzi I can say nothing at present. I have not seen Mr. Duane, nor am I at all capable of business yet. I am taken up and carried to bed by three servants: Chancellors and judges are sometimes placed on their woolsacks in as lamentable a condition; but I was not bred to the law, nor habituated to earn money to the last dregs—and, when one is to have no fees, can it be expected that I should go into court? Well! well! I will do the best I can when I am able. Good night till to-morrow!

Friday night, the 6th.

I was much too ill on Tuesday to finish this, and, besides that, recollected that whatever was to be heard you would learn from Paris sooner than from London. I began to write upon the first buzz of the courier being arrived; but all he brought was the provisional treaty with America, which too is not to take place till the general Peace does. This, however, we are told to expect soon—and there I must leave peace and war, kingdoms and states, and trust to your nephew for saying anything else; for in truth I am not able. The scale of life and death has been vibrating; I believe it is turned to the former. I have had two very good nights, and the progress of the gout seems quite stopped; but I am exceedingly low and weak, and it will take me some time to recover: but I assure you, my dear Sir, you may be easy. I have now a good opinion of myself, and I have spoken so plainly that you may believe me.

Adieu! You shall hear again soon, unless I see your

nephew, whom I will desire to give you a more particular account.

2377. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 7, 1782.

I have been so extremely ill that I say a great deal when I tell you I think I am recovering. Whether I shall recover even to where I was before seems very doubtful to me. The attack, though the fit was very short, was so violent and I have so little strength, that it will require much time at least to re-establish me.

Thus much I could not help saying to your kind inquiry, but neither my head nor my breast will let me say much more.

I thank you for accepting Mr. Gilpin's very obliging offer[1], which I shall much value and beg you to thank him for.

What I said of Pope's mother was taken from Vertue's MSS., but I had made a mistake, which is corrected in the new edition of the *Anecdotes*. Samuel Cooper's wife was sister of Pope's mother, and therefore Cooper was brother-in-law of Pope's father.

I am not likely to see Sappho[2] soon; in the meantime she has my free leave to indemnify herself with the high priest of Lemnos.

My poor head is not at all a receptacle for politics, and my voice as little fit to talk of them, especially when all is uncertainty and conjecture, nor is the busy world a scene for me, who have just made shift to linger on the threshold.

Letter 2377. — [1] Gilpin offered Horace Walpole one of his original drawings.

[2] 'Pray when you are well enough to see Lady Craven (whom Lord Strafford calls your Sappho) ask her after her lawn-sleeved Phaon, my worthy Diocesan.' (Mason to Walpole, Dec. 4, 1782.)

Adieu, my dear Sir! whenever I am able I will write again.—

It is true that I am tolerably recovered except in my right hand, which never will recover, for all joints are so encrusted with chalk-stones that I can scarce move any but my thumb; and though, as you perceive, I can still write by the help of the last, it is so slowly and with so much uneasiness that I commonly make Kirgate write for me.

When one is grown so old and so helpless, and foresee as I do that the next severe fit will probably carry me off, you will not wonder that I care very little for what is passing, and less for what is to happen when I am gone. Politics I have done with, and should were I in a more vigorous state. To me there is a new generation, and nothing has less decorum than an old man pretending to belong to another age. My notions were all embraced above forty years ago, and have never varied. They had little weight with anybody when I was younger. I should still less expect them to listen to an antediluvian. Why should I expect it? do such ancients as I dare to conform to new modes? I cannot think Mrs. Siddons the greatest prodigy that ever appeared, nor go to see her act the same part every week and cry my eyes out every time. Were I five-and-twenty, I suppose I should weep myself blind, for she is a fine actress, and fashion would make me think a brilliant what now seems to me only a very good rose diamond.

Still it is not that I am not very willing to be amused, and do try to divert myself as well as I can, and intend to do so to the end of my lease. For example, I have lately seen an essay on gardening written by Mons. Girardin[3],

[3] René Louis Girardin (d. 1808), author of *De la composition des paysages, ou des moyens d'embellir la nature près des habitations.* Rousseau lived with him at Ermenonville, and was buried there.

Rousseau's grave-digger. There are some sensible ideas in it, but as the French write by the laws of fashion more than by those of common sense, his rules are far from being all practicable. As it is the *ton* too to talk agriculture, his book concludes with it, as Bishop Berkeley's tar-water ended with the Trinity. Two passages are very delightful. Mons. Girardin, being a rigid classic, will tolerate nothing but Grecian temples and domes. Spires, those most graceful and picturesque of all elevations, he proscribes as Gothic and barbarous, and thinks he has exploded them for ever by this Brobdingnagian puerility: *Ils assassinent les nuages.*

His receipt for making rocks in your garden is not less admirable: 'Take a mountain, break it into pieces with a hammer, number the fragments and observe their antecedent positions: place them in their original order, cover the junctures with mould: plant ivy and grass and weeds, which will hide the fractures, and so you may have a cart-load of Snowdon or Penmenmaur in the middle of your bowling-green, and no soul will suspect that it did not grow there.'

Like the Abbé de Lisle he is fond too of erecting cenotaphs to heroes and patriots, which with the French rage imitating whatever is the vogue of the hour would convert their enclosures into churchyards, and Vestris would have a statue as well as Turenne. But we have no right to laugh at France; Vestris was a greater idol here than at Paris; Garrick's funeral was ten times more attended than Lord Chatham's, and Mrs. Siddons has obliterated General Elliot:

I nunc et nugas tecum meditare canoras!

That is, you may play on your celestinette, mend our gardens or the constitution, and the first singer or dancer will efface all your vigils in a moment, as much as if you

had endowed an hospital—for this is the land where all things are forgotten!

I have been two days labouring through this letter, and yet my lame awkwardness has made me blot it so that it is scarce legible; but I can do no better. Adieu!

2378. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 14, 1782.

I have been so extremely ill, Madam, that I was utterly incapable of dictating two lines, nor could I give you any account of myself but what was as bad as possible. Since yesterday morning I am certainly out of all manner of danger, but my breast is still so weak that I cannot speak to be heard without uneasiness, and therefore I must beg your Ladyship will excuse my saying any more now. You shall have a better account as soon as I am able to give it.

2379. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 17, 1782.

On not seeing nor hearing anything of your nephew, I sent to his house, and learnt, to my mortification, that he neither is in town nor is expected. This forces me, though little able, to say a few words to you myself. I have been extremely ill, though not dangerously, but am much mended within these two days; yet my breast is still so weak, that I must not dictate more than is absolutely necessary.

I have received and sent to Lord Orford your letter, the drawing, and the draft: on account of the last, I suppose he will forget all three; but *I* shall not, nor shall let *him*. I must obey Cav. Mozzi, though to his own prejudice, if he insists upon it; still I hope Mr. Duane will be able to

prevent great injustice; but Lord knows when we shall begin. I, at present, am utterly incapable; and, last Friday night, not only poor Mr. Duane, but Sharpe too, were within an inch of losing every paper they had in the world, and all those in their custody. A great fire broke out in Lincoln's Inn at eleven at night, and consumed twelve sets of chambers; but, beginning in a garret, most people saved their papers, as both Duane and Sharpe did; though the latter at first absolutely lost his senses, and ran about distracted, not knowing what he said or did. I conclude that I shall be recovered before he will have put his papers into order again. These are untoward accidents for poor Mozzi, but unavoidable.

I have been so entirely shut up and incapable of seeing anybody, that I neither know any politics, nor have breath to relate them if I did. The Peace seems at a stand; I know not why. We are prepared for the attack on Jamaica, and Spanish bravados are sunk much below par. I must finish, for I have quite exhausted myself.

Yours ever.

2380. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Christmas night, 1782.

I am as persevering as Widdrington in *Chevy Chase*, who fought with his stumps, for I am now undertaking to write to you without a finger, Madam. My hand is still swaddled in the bootikin, yet it is less irksome than to dictate. I am wonderfully recovered, and could walk about my room without a stick, if Tonton did not caper against me and throw me down, for I have no more elasticity in my joints than the tail of a paper-kite. Sleep is my great restorative; no dormouse beats me. Nay, I do not even look so ill as I have a right to do, though to be sure I might be admitted

at the resurrection without being rejected for a counterfeit corpse: but I cut short details about myself; the gout is a subject of no variety.

I cannot repay your Ladyship's story of *L'Amant voleur.* We continue to have robbers of the public, and of individuals, but their passions are all instigated *par les beaux yeux d'une cassette.* However, I have had an adventure not unentertaining. T'other day I received a letter from Lady Aldborough[1], an Irish Countess, whom I never saw in my days, but for one quarter of an hour seven years ago at old Lady Shelburne's. All she desires of me is, to select, correct, and print a sufficient number of her father's poems (whom she vulgarly calls the Honourable Nick Herbert) to make a quarto pamphlet, as she does not care to *give* or *sell* them to a bookseller, and then she concludes I will admit him into my *Catalogue of Noble Authors.* Her Lord, she says, is too much engaged in politics when at Dublin, and with improvements of his estate when in the country (which I am told he has improved to none at all), to assort the poems—and then, as ladies are abominably said to tell their minds in the postscript, she orders me to enclose my answer to her Lord *that it may come to her free.* Thus I may lay out 30*l.* or 40*l.* for her, and she would not give sixpence to know whether I will or not. I have sent a most respectful no, and have saved her the sixpence, which is all I shall save her.

I have received a much more flattering compliment, and as disinterested as her Ladyship's was the contrary. Mr. Bull, to amuse me when I was ill, sent me my *Royal and Noble Authors* let into four sumptuous folios in red morocco gilt, with beautiful impressions of almost all the

LETTER 2380.—[1] Barbara, daughter and heiress of Hon. Nicholas Herbert, of Great Glemham, Suffolk; m. Edward Stratford, second Earl of Aldborough; d. 1785.

personages of whom there are prints. As they came when I was at the worst, I sent him word that if I might compare little things with great, he put me in mind of Queen Elizabeth, who laid an Earl's robes on Lord Hunsdon's death-bed.

Mrs. Siddons continues to be the mode, and to be modest and sensible. She declines great dinners, and says her business and the cares of her family take up her whole time. When Lord Carlisle carried her the tribute-money from Brooks's, he said she was not *maniérée* enough. 'I suppose she was grateful,' said my niece, Lady Maria. Mrs. Siddons was desired to play 'Medea' and 'Lady Macbeth.'—'No,' she replied, 'she did not look on them as female characters.' She was questioned about her transactions with Garrick: she said, 'He did nothing but put her out; that he told her she moved her right hand when it should have been her left.—In short,' said she, 'I found I must not shade the tip of his nose.'

Have you seen the last two volumes of Bachaumont's *Mémoires secrets*, Madam? if you have not, don't give yourself the trouble; there is but one tolerable trait, but that is charming. They have hung a room at Ferney with portraits of Voltaire's friends. Under the Abbé de Lille, the translator of Virgil, they have placed this happy application,—

Nulli flebilior quam tibi, Virgili.

They again talk much of peace. Oh, let it come! We have lost territories enough, and got heroes enough in their room! If it is a bad peace, at least we shall not be fools for making it; when we have been, as we have always been, masters to make as good an one as we pleased. I don't suppose our enemies will be as obliging idiots.

You cannot imagine, Madam, how long I have been engraving this letter. I am in debt for some others, but

my secretary of state must answer them, for I find our royal breast is as tired as our hand.

Yo el Rey.

2381. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 7, 1783.

Though the newspapers have advertised a book called *Every Man his own Letter-writer*, I doubt it will not keep me so long. I really have no movement in any finger of my right hand but my thumb; and with so serious an excuse, should employ my secretary, if I were not more ashamed to dictate my nonsense, as Lady Anne justly calls it, than to write it. It is no more uneasy to write than to speak the first foolish thing that comes into one's head; but to oblige a third person not only to hear, but transcribe it, is being such a simpleton in cool blood, that if I write by proxy, my letters will have no more nonsense or sense than those which royal personages send to one another from the Secretary's office on births and deaths.

I have taken the air, and might have done so a week ago, but was in dread of a relapse. However, as I am all recovered but my hand, and as I fear there is no chance of that ever being well again, I must determine to carry it about in its night-gown, or stay at home for my short forever.

I know nothing, at least nothing that your Ladyship would care about more than I do. I have a general notion about treaties of peace, which the present has not hitherto contradicted. It is, that when peace is necessary to the mutual views of two Prime Ministers of two hostile nations, it is clapped up in an instant, the material articles being postponed, to be adjusted afterwards by commissaries—but that, if they go into discussions, the same causes remain for

dispute and quarrel, that made the war—and then the treaty breaks off. I hope that is not the case at present—I am very willing not to be a prophet in my own country. *On prétend* that certain invisible machines, of which one heard much a year or two ago, and which were said to be constructed of cork, and to be worn somewhere or other behind, are now to be transplanted somewhere before, in imitation of the Duchess of Devonshire's pregnancy, as all under-jaws advanced upon the same principle. Apropos, Lady Jersey desired Mr. Stonhewer to order me to ask Mr. Hayley what had cured him when his head was disordered, her Ladyship having a relation in that situation. I sent her word that I not only was not acquainted with, but had never seen him, yet I could tell her his nostrum; he had been put into a course of breast-milk, and sucked the nine muses, and is now as tame as a lamb.

As this letter, Madam, is written entirely *in usum* of the Dauphiness Anne, it is long enough—at least my hand finds so, which has not attempted a quarter so much, since I had the honour of writing to your Ladyship last, and now aches a good deal.

2382. To Sir Horace Mann.

Jan. 7, 1783.

I know not what to do about your complaint on your letters being produced against General Murray, though it is very well founded[1]. Your nephew is not, has not been, in town. When he comes, I will speak to him. For myself, I never saw Murray, nor know who are his connections. For Mr. Conway, as Commander-in-Chief, it would be most improper for him to take the least part, the trial pending. I have not heard it named since I came to town, but that it

Letter 2382. — [1] Sir William Draper produced a letter of Sir Horace Mann, who had found some fault with General Murray. *Walpole.*

would be finished last week; which, however, I believe it is not. As I have not been out of my house yet, but twice to take the air, and seen only the few that come to me, I can give you little account of the transactions or conversation of the world. For above three weeks I was too ill to see anybody but my most intimate friends; and at present the town is deserted, and will be till Saturday sevennight, the Birthday. I do, as you see, write myself, yet my only motion is in my thumb and wrist. I can scarcely bend any other joint of my right hand, and believe never shall: thence, writing being difficult and even painful, I very seldom attempt it, and generally employ a secretary.

The Peace is certainly not yet arrived. Armaments, and from them the stocks, look inauspiciously; I know nothing more.

I told you Lord Mountstuart was leaving Turin. He came the day before yesterday: but my intelligence of Lord Northington's succeeding him was not equally authentic; at least, he is not yet named.

From Mr. Duane not a word yet; nor have I been well enough to do business had he come to me: at sixty-five one does not recover in a moment from an attack in ten places, and with so weak a breast as mine. All the accounts I receive of my nephew speak him frantic; you shall judge from one. One of his footmen was carried before Lord Walpole for getting a bastard, and committed to prison, as usual. Lord Orford wrote a most angry letter to his cousin; and told him, that when he himself was at Hull with his militia, his servants and soldiers got so many children, that the Mayor thanked him for such a bounteous propagation of the species. He himself believes he has contributed; a weeding girl, whom he took out of his garden and keeps, having lately made him a present of a daughter: but I believe the Mayor of Hull might thank one of the

footmen. All this is mighty indifferent to me, who have done caring about him. Indeed, it would be hard to confine my nephew while Lord George Gordon is at large; who is daily trying mischiefs that do not tend to the propagation of the species, and is not so mad as to be excusable[2]. I must now repose my hand—my letter will not set out till Friday. As I have leisure enough, there is no occasion to fatigue myself: yet I must learn new matter if I add more.

Thursday, 9th.

General Murray's trial, it seems, has been finished some days; but, the report not having been yet made to the King, the event is not known, as courts-martial never disclose their sentence till ratified by Majesty. In general, it is not thought that Sir William Draper made out much.

The Peace is out of order with an ague—the cold fit is on it at present; but, as Mr. Townshend has not notified to the City that it is given over, I trust the doctors have still hopes.

Friday has produced nothing—the voice of the town is war: still, till the negotiation is declared to be broken off, I will believe and hope that it is yet going on, and may end happily.

2383. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 22, 1783.

I have had so little to say, Madam, and so much to do in making visits of thanks to the charitable who visited me in my illness, that I have not been so correspondent as

[2] He had been writing letters and distributing hand-bills, in which Fox was called a Papist, and in which the unsettled state of Ireland was said to be due to the toleration of Roman Catholics.

Letter 2383.—Dated by Vernon Smith Jan. 29, and by C. Jan. 25. Jan. 22 is apparently the correct date. (See *Notes and Queries*, Nov. 3, 1900.)

usual. I have also been for two days at Strawberry, where it snowed most of the time. In truth, I have still a more real cause for silence—the lameness of this hand, which can write but a few lines at a time, and must rest every quarter of an hour; so that the expedition with which I used to dispatch my letters is quite gone, and they are become a pain instead of an amusement.

You know, to be sure, Madam, that the Peace is arrived. I cannot express how glad I am. I care not a straw what the terms are, which I believe I know more imperfectly than anybody in London. I am not apt to love details—my wish was to have peace, and the next, to see America secure of its liberty. Whether it will make good use of it, is another point. It has an opportunity that never occurred in the world before, of being able to select the best parts of every known constitution; but I suppose it will not, as too prejudiced against royalty to adopt it even as a corrective of aristocracy and democracy, though *our* system has proved that every evil had better have two enemies to contend with than one, as the third may turn the scale on every emergence; but when the one defeats the only other, it is decisive. In short, it is necessary there should be government, but that government should be checked as much as those it controls; for one man, or a few, or a multitude, are still men, and consequently not fit to be trusted with unlimited power. The misfortune is, that men cannot be trusted with the power of doing right, without having the power of doing wrong too, and the more you limit them, the more they pant for greater latitude. However, the more they are limited, the farther they have to go before they acquire the boundless latitude they long for. These are some of my visions, which the experience of all ages and countries has shown, are such as scarce ever have been realized.

Saturday, 26th [1].

I had written the above on Wednesday, but on seeing our Lord on Thursday did not finish it. Well, Madam, you must hate only the Dutch. The French and the Spaniards are our good friends, and you may *lawfully* speak well even of the Americans, without being called a rebel and republican, as I was by Marie Alacoque [2]. I know few of the terms of the preliminaries, but that Gibraltar or Rock-Elliot is still in the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. When I do learn all the articles, I intend to like all, for I must be so fair as to say that they will be better than I expected we should ever obtain. Nay, if the French had not been as great blunderbusses as we, they might have reduced us much lower long ago. If Ireland has slipped out of our yoke too, the French have no title to boast, who might have had it themselves if they had thought of it before the volunteers. Now I hope it will be a perpetual thorn in their sides.

As one is always open to new calamities on the cessation of the old, I now expect that one shall be robbed and murdered two or three times a day, ay, and a night, more than ever, on disbanding the army; and then we shall have such swarms of French, yes, and insolent ones too! What is that to me? Oh, a great deal, Madam; they will come to see Strawberry, perhaps have recommendations, and I must ask them to dine! Is that nothing to a poor superannuated invalid?

I know no news—nay, news are but beginning; news out of Parliament-tide are fruits out of season, have not the true flavour. Besides, when Lord Ossory is in town, I am like a vice-chancellor, who is nobody when his principal is

[1] Jan. 26, 1783, fell on Sunday; the date given above is probably either a slip of the pen or a misprint.

[2] Lady Mary Coke; see note 7 on letter to Mason of May 31, 1778.

on the spot. I shall, therefore, not trespass any longer on his office, but wish your Ladyship good night.

2384. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Thursday, Jan. 23, 1783.

After so long a suspense, which, I own, staggered my faith, the preliminaries of peace are signed[1], and the wounds of the groaning world may be closed. What the terms are, or how they will be approved or condemned, is no part of my consideration. I have long eagerly wished for peace, and scarce expected to live to see it. I shall look to no more eras!—the rest will be like the beginning of a new volume, of which I am only to see a few pages!

The Parliament met on Tuesday, but the definitive courier did not arrive till yesterday noon; so on the first day all the troops on every side lay on their arms, and not a shot was fired.

Friday.

You will find that my intelligence is not very good; for the courier did not arrive till yesterday evening. It is true, the French agent had got notice sooner; and Lord Clermont[2] had a letter on Wednesday (whence the report) from the Duchesse de Polignac[3], saying the preliminaries were signed. I doubt there was a little jockeyship in this, and that the French had contrived to retard the courier, that they might buy into our stocks before the rise. Madame de Pompadour made a vigorous job by such a manœuvre at the Peace of Paris.

Well! France, Spain, and America are at peace with us;

Letter 2384.—[1] Preliminary Articles of Peace between Great Britain and France, and Great Britain and Spain were signed at Versailles on Jan. 20, 1783.

[2] Fortescue, Lord Clermont, an Irish peer, who went frequently to Paris, where his wife was much taken notice of by the Queen of France. *Walpole.*

[3] The principal favourite of the Queen of France. *Walpole.*

but not Holland, which has only agreed yet to a suspension of arms. It looks as if they did not find themselves so much thought on as they expected—a mighty new case, indeed, for little folks to be sacrificed by great! I don't tell you that this is so; it is only an *il me semble*: I know no secrets, nor trouble myself about *them*.

Your great Mediterranean object is safe—Gibraltar. Whatever questionable points there may be in the treaty, they cannot, be what they will, occasion half the clamour that the reddition of *Rock-Elliot* would have made. There are many, I believe, who think it is *in the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields* (to talk in the language of Acts of Parliament), and would as easily have relinquished the Isle of Wight, which French modesty once demanded[4]. His Catholic Majesty's obstinacy has had a *démenti*, for a royal mule may be restive in vain.

It had been pity to have died of my late fit of gout, when peace, for which I had so long ardently sighed, was so near! I shall certainly not be one of the disapprovers. Nay, I shall certainly find it better than I expected (I know when[5]) we should obtain. On that subject I shall not expatiate—nay, nor talk more of the Peace, as I know so little of the matter.

The report on General Murray's case is not yet made; nor will be, they say, till Monday. The reading over the evidence took up many days. When I see your nephew, I will charge him with your apology to the General, if you have not.

This is a brief letter, but the matter will stand in lieu of length. As the second volume of winter is but begun, there will probably be no want of topics. It is Parliament that I call winter, begin and end when it will. The two

[4] About 1781 or 1782, when some overtures of peace had been made from England. *Walpole.*

[5] In 1779, when the French fleet was at Plymouth. *Walpole.*

Houses make the seasons, and produce storms more regularly than our elements. Adieu!

2385. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

The Martyrdom, 1783.

Thirdly, Madam, if I was never to write to your Ladyship till I have the full and free use of every finger of my right hand, I should never write again, for I certainly shall recover none of the four; and if I could not move the joint of the thumb, I should not be able to use a pen at all. As you perceive I can, I hope you will not disband the four invalids for the sake of old Colonel Thumb, who begs to die in your service.

Secondly, I do rejoice in the Peace, and will, though I find it grows very unpopular,—and fourthly, I will not correct my historic errors: I am not apt to recant my tenets, nor will give up the only king that I have defended; especially as I shall never enter the *sanctum sanctorum*, where one's religion, like a chameleon, takes the hue of the place the instant one enters it. One quality of the chameleon I have, and rejoice in having: the orbit of my eye allows me to look backward; other creeping things only see before them, and think but of advancing: I keep my eye on what I have always been and choose to be uniform. It will not be difficult now to hold out a little while longer.

I was last night at Mrs. Montagu's to hear Le Texier read *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, and was tired to death; for though it had merit at first in the infancy of comedy, it is mere farce, and has no characters. But the famous phrase struck me as applicable to Cumberland, who has just produced a tragedy in prose; he has thought that he had often written verses, and did not know that he had all his life been writing prose.

We are going to suffer an inundation of French. It is better at least than an invasion of them, which I cannot conceive why they have not committed. Have you seen his Majesty of Prussia's intimation to the Dutch that he intends to saddle them with the house of Orange for the sake of preserving their *liberty*[1]? I remember a story of a lady who had a favourite plump lark, of which she was very fond. On going out of town, she gave strict orders to her housemaid to take the tenderest care of it. The woman promised. 'No, I am sure you will neglect it and starve it.' 'Lord! Madam, how can your Ladyship think so? I assure you——' 'No, I know you will starve it!' 'Come, I know what I will do; I'll kill it and eat it.'

There is an insurrection at Portsmouth of a Scotch regiment[2], who will not go and plunder the remainder of the Indies; and Lord George Gordon, who is excellent at putting out fires, has offered to go and appease them. How can anybody say that there is a dearth of virtue and patriotism?

P.S. Madame de Virri is dead suddenly, as she was just coming to England.

Letter 2385.—[1] At an assembly of Dutch deputies the following communication from the King of Prussia was read by the Prussian Minister: 'That his Majesty perceiving, with great regret and much astonishment, that the gross insults offered to the Prince Stadtholder, and the Princess his consort, were so far from being put a stop to, that they still continued; and it had ever been refused to do justice to the Prince on that head, it would therefore ill become him, as uncle to those illustrious persons, to be any longer silent upon the subject, and therefore requested that the said deputies would use their utmost endeavours that an effectual stop be put to the said injurious insinuations laid to the charge of the Prince of Orange, and that justice be effectually rendered him. His Majesty hopes that some regard will be paid to his request, as if (contrary to his expectations) any farther insults should be offered to the Prince and Princess, *he shall think himself obliged to espouse their interests in a more effectual manner.*' (*Gent. Mag.* 1782, p. 597.)

[2] The Seventy-seventh or Highland Regiment.

2386. To William Suckling[1].

Dear Sir,

The more I reflect on what you said to me yesterday, the stronger is my opinion that the most faithful and exact account should be given of all the fees and profits belonging to the office. There can be no right to anything that it is necessary to conceal from those who have authority to ask an account: and as this is my opinion, I must beg you will observe it as far as I have any title to interfere, and to keep it as a record of my sentiments, if they do not prevail in other offices. I do not pretend to judge for others, but I am very solicitous to preserve my own conduct uniform with what it has always been. I have no notion of holding a public office and not boing ready to give an account of it at a minute's warning.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours most sincerely,
Hor. Walpole.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 31, 1783.

2387. To Sir Horace Mann.

Feb. 3, 1783.

Though I begin my letter on this 3rd, I do not know whether it will embark for some days. I hate to send you maimed accounts, which instead of informing can only perplex you. Everything you wish to know is in an embryo state. You may wonder, as General Murray's sentence is public, that I have not transmitted it to you; the newspapers have: yet it is far from an affair concluded. The sentence was a strange one; yet, I imagine, calculated to prevent very desperate consequences between a madman

Letter 2386.—Not in C.; reprinted from Lord Orford's *Works* (1798), vol. ii. p. 389.

[1] Deputy Collector of Customs Inwards.

and a very hot-headed one. Of twenty-nine charges they pronounced twenty-seven trifling; and on the two others, that seem not very grave, reprimanded Murray; and then ordered the accuser and accusee to make mutual apologies to each other. Draper, though the greater Bedlamite, obeyed: Murray would not utter all that was enjoined, and was put under arrest. It seems that Draper had during the siege used, even in writing, most harsh expressions to his commander. Pains are taking to mollify the latter, and reconcile him to submission—there I must leave their history till I know how it ends.

I can tell you nothing more definite about the Peace. The ratification of the preliminaries is expected, they say, this week. Scarce anything has been said on the subject yet in Parliament; but as the articles, since published, seem to give much offence, it is not probable that the House of Commons should become the temple of silence on this occasion. You will not expect me, who know nothing of trade, &c., to specify the supposed grievances. I am content with peace in the lump: I did not suppose that the loss of America and Minorca, &c., would improve our commerce or glory; nor do I wonder that they who threw them away had rather blame anybody than themselves.

The papers will tell you of a little disturbance at Portsmouth, where a Scotch regiment, destined for the East Indies, mutinied, claiming a promise of being disbanded at the Peace. They almost murdered their colonel, but have been quieted, on assurance that none shall go involuntarily. A second regiment caught the spirit, but were more easily pacified. Would not one think that our nabobs have drained the Indies, when men would rather go back to Scotland than to mines of gold and diamonds?

Lord Mountstuart will be no longer your neighbour;

he goes to Madrid, and Lord Carmarthen to Paris. I have not heard who is to come from the latter—I mean as Ambassador: a multitude of individuals are expected, and above the rest the Duc de Chartres.

I have not yet heard anything of your nephew, but, by accident, that he will come to town for the sake of his daughters. His absence is inconvenient to me, or rather to you; as he might tell you perhaps twenty things that escape me, who have totally quitted public places, and go but to a very few private houses. However, you lose little worth knowing. Our newspapers are grown such minute registers of everything that happens, and still more of everything that is said to have happened, that you would easily perceive if I omitted anything of consequence. I do little more than confirm the rare truths by mentioning them. The swarms of daily lies die every evening. There is another character due to our papers; if they do get hold of truth, they are sure of overlaying it by blunders; scarce ever do they state any event in accurate terms or faithful narratives, unless when there are any melancholy circumstances that had better be suppressed. Those they detail minutely, to the great satisfaction of a malignant public, and to the grief of the families concerned: reason sufficient, one should think, for everybody to discourage such vehicles of ill-nature. A pretty woman that makes, or is supposed to have made, a slip, is hunted down as inveterately as a Prime Minister used to be: I do not mean that the latter escapes the better for having everybody associated with him. Our newspapers, like German princes, hunt all kinds of game at once—boars, wolves, foxes, hares, rabbits; a mouse would not have quarter if it came in their way. Adieu for the present!

Sunday, 9th.

But this morning I have learnt the termination of

General Murray's affair. He wanted to resign his regiment rather than submit, though he had been ruined by it; having three children and his wife big with a fourth, for whom he begged a pension of three hundred a year. The King excused him the reprimand on the two charges; and General Conway has laboured with so much zeal and good nature, that at last he prevailed on him and the court-martial to let him alter *one* word of the apology. This is a bigger detail than I should have studied but to satisfy you. My letter will now set out on Tuesday: from you it is long since I had one.

Monday, 10th.

The ratification of the preliminaries by France is come, and that of Spain is expected in a week. This day seven-night is to be the great combat in both Houses; at least, warm opposition is talked of: but such rumours are far from being always verified. For this last week there has been talk of changes; yet only one has happened, the resignation of Lord Carlisle[1], who, it is said, disapproves the sacrifice of the loyalists. Others think he is more discontent at not going Ambassador to Paris. I should not think these reports worth mentioning, but as the newspapers have been full of them, though they certainly know nothing of the matter. Neither the old ministry, nor the fragment of the last, have yet spoken out; and therefore the public can form no judgement what will happen. The capital point, the Peace, is attained. Factions there will always be; the world cannot stand stock-still. War is a tragedy; other politics but a farce. It is plain mankind think so; for, however occupied the persons concerned are by what they are interested in, how little do people dwell upon what is past, unless it has come to blows! How often, when in Parliament, did I hear questions called

LETTER 2387.—[1] Lord Steward of the Household.

the most important that had ever come before the House, which a twelvemonth after no mortal remembered! Adieu!

P.S. The King has instituted a new order of knighthood in Ireland[2]. There are to be sixteen, and they are to wear a watered light blue ribbon.

2388. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 8, 1783.

Your Dryads must go into black gloves, Madam: their father-in-law, Lady Nature's second husband, is dead! Mr. Brown[1] dropped down at his own door yesterday. The death of the second monarch of landscape is a considerable event to me, the historian of that kingdom[2]—the political world, I believe, is more occupied by the resignation of Lord Carlisle; but the petty incidents of the Red Book are much below my notice, and I care not who is grubbed up or transplanted. The American war is terminated, to my great satisfaction, and there end my politics! I cannot tap a new chapter; but am returned to all my old studies, and read over again my favourite authors on times past; you must not be surprised if I should send you a collection of Tonton's *bons mots*: I have found a precedent for such a work. A grave author wrote a book on the hunt of the Grand Sénéchal of Normandy, and of *les* dits *du bon chien* Souillard, *qui fut au Roi Loy de France onzième du nom. Louis XII*, the reverse of the predecessor of the same name, did not leave to his historian to celebrate his dog *Relais*, but did him the honour of being his biographer himself; and for a reason that was becoming so excellent a King.

[2] The Order of St. Patrick.

Letter 2388.—[1] Lancelot, known as 'Capability,' Brown.

[2] Alluding to his *Essay on Modern Gardening*.

It was *pour animer les descendans d'un si brave chien à se rendre aussi bons que lui, et encore meilleurs.* It was great pity that the Cardinal d'Amboise had no bastard puppies, or to be sure his Majesty would have written his Prime Minister's life too, for a model to his successors.

As this is a very gossiping letter about nothings, I will tell your Ladyship an incident that struck me the other night. Lady Beaulieu thought Lady Albemarle mourned too long for Lady Vere; Mrs. Hussey said, 'Madam, they were cousin-germans.' I scoffed at Mrs. Hussey, thinking them removed by two or three generations, but she was in the right; Lady Albemarle is daughter of the first Duke of Richmond, and Lord Vere was son of the first Duke of St. Albans; yet Charles II has been dead ninety-eight years; nay, Lady Albemarle or the Bishop of Hereford[3] may mourn some years hence for the other. Lady Albemarle supped at Lady Aylesbury's on Sunday night, drank two glasses of champagne, and stayed till past one in as good spirits as ever I saw her.

There has been a more rapid succession in another family. Several years ago, when Lord Strafford and I were at Lord Thomond's, we walked to Walden Church, and were shown in a vault there the coffins of eleven Earls and Countesses of Suffolk that had died since 1700. With this last Earl[4] there have been seven more since that time. You will not wonder, Madam, that I know no modern news, when I am so deep in the lore of obituaries! Your other correspondents will tell you *les dits et gestes du siècle*; it is more seemly for me to concern myself about past generations than about the rising one.

[3] Lord James Beauclerk (1702–1787), Bishop of Hereford, 1746–87.

[4] Thomas Howard (1721–1783), fourteenth Earl of Suffolk.

2389. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 10, 1783.

I have at last received your *Fresnoy* from Sir Joshua. You have made it a very handsome book; and I am pleased that you have added Gray's Chronologic List. Sir Joshua has lately given me too his last discourse to the Academy, which I will tell you, *entre nous*, is rather an apology for, or an avowal of, the object of his own style, that is effect, or impression on all sorts of spectators. This lesson will rather do hurt than good on his disciples, and make them neglect all kind of finishing. Nor is he judicious in quoting Vandyck, who at least specified silks, satins, velvets. Sir Joshua's draperies represent clothes, never their materials. Yet more: Vandyck and Sir Godfrey Kneller excelled all painters in hands; Sir Joshua's are seldom even tolerably drawn. I saw t'other day, one of, if not the best of his works, the portrait of Lord Richard Cavendish. Little is distinguished but the head and hand; yet the latter, though nearest to the spectator, is abominably bad: so are those of my three nieces; and though the effect of the whole is charming, the details are slovenly, the faces only red and white; and his journeyman, as if to distinguish himself, has finished the lock and key of the table like a Dutch flower-painter.

I observe that you say that in Pope's Epistle to Jervas he changed *Wortley* for *Worsley*[1] in later editions, but surely it was *Worsley* in the earliest editions. I did not know that it had ever been printed Wortley, being so possessed of its

Letter 2389. — [1] Hon. Frances Thynne, daughter of first Viscount Weymouth, and wife of Sir Robert Worsley, fourth Baronet, of Appuldurcombe, Isle of Wight.

being *Worsley* that I did not perceive the change. Lady Worsley, mother of Lady Carteret, was a beauty, and friend of Pope.

Are you not concerned for the death of Brown? I made a bad epitaph for him, which, if you please, you may recolour with any tints that remain on your pallet with which you repainted *Fresnoy*: here it is:—

> With one lost Paradise the name
> Of our first ancestor is stained;
> Brown shall enjoy unsullied fame
> For many a Paradise regained.

I have a mind, should you approve it, to call designers of gardens, *gardenists*, to distinguish them from *gardeners* or *landscapists*. I wish you would coin a term for the art itself.

I have heard nothing of Cumberland's pedestrian tragedy, but that all the men laughed at, all the women cried at it. I know no more literary news, and I have done with all other. Adieu!

2390. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 18, 1783—a great-grandchild of 1688.

Pray, Madam, do not imagine that I pretend to send you a cool newspaper, when probably you have had my intelligence anticipated by a courier: oh dear, no; but as gazetteers think it their regular duty to specify everything that happens, as well as everything that does not, though all the world may know both, I acquaint your Ladyship, that at eight this morning (which eight o'clock was part of yesterday, Monday) the administration was defeated[1]

Letter 2390. — [1] The Shelburne ministry was defeated in the House of Commons by 224 to 208 votes in the debate on the Preliminary Articles of the Peace.

on the very same field where another administration[2] was routed about this time twelvemonth, and, which makes the victory more memorable, the general who was beaten last year, and one of the generals who beat him[3], had joined their forces to fight the general[4], who had had a share over the vanquished one of this time twelvemonth.

This is all that is necessary to be told by me, who have ceased to be an *examiner*, and am only a *spectator*.

I will not distract you with any other news foreign to the big event of the day. You would listen to nothing else except conjectures; and those, though one cannot help forming them, would be so entirely coined by my own brain, that they would not assist you. I will not even answer any paragraph of your Ladyship's last, except one word about the loyalists. As I always apply my reflections to my own way of thinking, that is, consider what operation any great event will have in *my* system, I draw some sweetness from the dereliction of the loyalists. I do pity sincerely the conscientious among them, but I trust that this example will a little cure people of the distemper of loyalty. If the more zealous of the *Rubiconians*, and those whose cause they promote against the general happiness, would ever read, or ever profit by what they might read, what a lesson would the American war be against aiming at extending power! *Quieta non movere* was the maxim of a man[5] who I, who have seen a good deal, do not think wanted common sense; Lord Chatham, no doubt, bought us more glory, but very dearly. We have paid still dearer for losses and disgrace. My quiet statesman was called the father of corruption, though his political parents and children had been, and have been full of the same blood. Was it a

[2] The North ministry.
[3] Charles Fox.
[4] The Earl of Shelburne.
[5] Sir Robert Walpole.

capital crime to bribe those *on sale* to promote the happiness of themselves and others, to bribe them to preserve the constitution and make the commerce of their country flourish? Very different experiments have been tried since. I beg your pardon, Madam, for wandering back to my own ideas; but when a revolution happens, it is natural to reflect on those one has seen. I am a Methusalem from the scenes I have seen; yet, t'other day, I made an acquaintance with one a little my senior; yet we are to be very intimate for a long time, for my new friend is but ninety-four. It is General Oglethorpe; I had not seen him these twenty years, yet knew him instantly. As he did not recollect me, I told him it was a proof how little he was altered, and I how much. I said I would visit him; he replied, 'No, no; I can walk better than you; I will come to you.' He is alert, upright, has his eyes, ears, and memory fresh. If you want any particulars of the last century, I can procure them, but I know nothing of what is to happen *to-morrow*.

P.S. I have just seen in the *Public Advertiser* a passage in a letter from the Emperor to the Pope, which informs me how little the delegates of Heaven have occasion to *read*. Cæsar tells St. Peter, 'that *he* possesses in his own breast a voice which tells what, as legislator and protector of religion, he ought to pursue or desist from; and that voice, with the assistance of divine grace, and the honest and just character which he feels in himself, can never lead him into error.' There! Madam, there is imperial infallibility to some purpose! Henry VIII undoubtedly felt the same inspiration when he became head of our Church; and I dare to say that the Earls of Derby and the Dukes of Athol, till they sold the Isle of Man, had exactly the same unerring feelings. That inward voice,

which the Greeks called *Gastromuthos*, prattles to every monarch before he can speak himself, and did so to Henry VI in his cradle, though he lived to lose everything.

2391. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 18, 1783.

I HINTED to you that the Peace was not popular—you must make a prodigious stride from that warning: you must extend your idea to the brink of the precipice, and conceive—not that the Peace is to be broken ere consummate, but that it has already overturned the peace-maker! It is not eleven o'clock of Tuesday morning, and the House of Commons, that sat yesterday on the preliminaries, has not been up three hours, after—in short, after carrying a question against Lord Shelburne by 224 to 208. He was scarce less beaten in the other House; where, even with the support of the household troops, the bishops, and the Scotch, he had but 69 votes to 55.

Particulars of this revolution, which it must be, I do not pretend to tell you. The question moved by the opposition I barely heard last night at the card-table at Princess Amelie's, who received a note from Lord Duncannon. It was a temperate but very artful one; declared against infringing the treaty, though announcing that the House would consider the terms. This is all I know: both Houses are but just gone to bed; and even the newspapers, who have been sitting up gaping for intelligence all night, have not gotten on their clean shirts yet.

Now will you be—and so by this time is everybody else—eager to know what will be next. That is precisely what I neither know nor guess; in which last point, no doubt, I differ from most people: but you know I always forbid myself conjectures; I have little opinion of my own pene-

tration—nay, nor of any one's. I have a rule about penetration, which may be paradoxical, and yet I think there is good sense in it: it is this. How would a wise man calculate what is to happen? Why, he must state to himself appearances and causes, and then conclude that they would produce the natural consequences. Now, it is a thousand to one that some foolish circumstance or other interferes, influences some very unforeseen event, and destroys all his fine ratiocination: in short, some mistress, wife, servant, favourite, or clerk gives a sudden bias, and turns reason and its train aside; and the philosopher, who would have disdained to make an unlogical computation, finds all his penetration disappointed.

Well! though I cannot lead you a step forward, I will open a little of the back scene, which, at least, will prevent you from making wrong reflections. You must not then imagine that the mere articles of the preliminaries have caused the approaching revolution; you must not suppose that any sacrifices of glory, interest, or dominion, nor even the dereliction of the loyalists, though sounded the most loudly, occasioned the fermentation that has made the House of Commons boil over and cast off the administration. More human causes than national honour and national interest, than commiseration and justice, made the fire beneath burn too intensely. In one word, my good friend, Lord North and Mr. Fox united their forces and defeated Lord Shelburne in a pitched battle. The town says that he deferred treating with either till it was too late; and that he did treat with them when it was too late, even last week, when he was rejected by both. Whether *they* can agree better if they are to divide the spoils is now to be seen. But I shall not step over the threshold of next minute; sufficient to the day is the event thereof: I shall say no more, but what I replied (and often do reply, like an

old man fond of his own sayings) to a person yesterday morning, who asked me 'How all this would end?' I answered, 'How will it begin?' That is the proper answer always on political emergencies. Politics never end: after struggles they come to a settlement, but consequences are chained to that settlement; yet I meant more. The first time I used the expression, *How will it begin?* was in the American war; it was that war that overturned a firm settlement: and when I was asked how it would end, I foresaw how often that question would be repeated, before any man would be able to answer it—the question of to-day is but one instance.

Tuesday, in the evening.

I own I was grown uneasy at not hearing from you, and sent to your nephew's on Saturday, and again to-day, having heard he was expected. He came to me two hours ago, and brought me a letter from you, which explains your silence in a very kind manner, as you forbore writing in pity to my weak hand; but you see that, lame as all the fingers are but the thumb, I can write glibly. Indeed, excepting in my right hand, I am much the better for my late fit: it has cleared my blood, and revived my spirits.

When your nephew and I had gossiped over the great event of the morning, I did not forget your disquiet about General Murray, though everybody else has; as well as the controversy on foot in print between Lord Cornwallis and Sir Henry Clinton[1]. The Peace is the topic on the carpet, and has obliterated the war. Sir Horace junior will go to the General to-morrow, and, by his own prudent thought, will not tap the matter of your letters, not to put into his wild head what never came into it, or maybe slipped out of

Letter 2391.—[1] This controversy was on the subject of the last campaign in America. *Walpole.*

it; but, should Murray mention the subject, your nephew will satisfy him of your innocence.

I can say no more now; nor have time to speak on the war you foresee between emperors and empresses. I have not forgotten Cav. Mozzi, though Mr. Duane seems to have done so, to whom I will send the moment I have any leisure. Though I have nothing to do with politics, I live so much at home, and my house is in so central a position, that it is a little coffee-house in a morning when the town is full, and I am perpetually interrupted. When the present ferment is somewhat abated, I will try what I can do with Mr. Duane's assistance. Adieu! you shall hear again as soon as the prospect clears. I do not send you random guesses or reports.

2392. To Sir Horace Mann.

Monday evening, Feb. 24, 1783.

The victory of the opposition on Tuesday last was followed by another on Friday. Lord Shelburne took Saturday to consider on it; yesterday morning acquainted the Cabinet with his intention of retiring; notified that resolution to the rest of his adherents in the evening, and resigned his post this morning. In fact, it would have been difficult to have maintained it against a House of Commons in which he had lost the majority, and in which the supplies are not yet voted. Parliaments are not to be governed when they will not give money to govern them by. This Parliament, too, has gotten an ugly trick of turning out even those who did pay them handsomely[1]; and yet some people in the country are so visionary as to imagine that they could improve the constitution or construction of the House of Commons. I don't know what such folks would have, if

Letter 2392.—[1] Lord North. *Walpole.*

they are not content with the demolition of two administrations in one year!

As Lord Shelburne has been routed by the united forces of Lord North and Mr. Fox, it is supposed that these two chieftains will form a new administration of their friends, though neither will be the nominal Premier; the first declaring against being *the minister* again, and the Duke of Portland being the ostensible successor of Lord Rockingham. From this junction the new administration is expected; but how it is to be transacted, or how arranged, I am totally ignorant.

The triumphant party declare for adherence to the Peace, though they condemn it. Indeed, I hope it will be inviolate. It is not within the compass of my knowledge to pronounce whether we could have had better terms or not. They are better than, for some years, I have thought we could obtain; and though I was far from admiring Lord Shelburne's conduct last spring[2], and have been as far from applauding his behaviour since, which has been improper in every light, still I am glad that he did make peace; and I am not less persuaded, that, had the war continued, we should not only have suffered still more, but made a peace much much worse at the end. Lord Shelburne's motives may not have been laudable; his management of the treaty injudicious and rash; still I prefer the Peace, such as it is, to continuation of the war. I believe I differ from some of my best friends, but I must be governed by my own feelings, and must speak the truth.

Your nephew tells me he intends to make you a visit next month: he makes no more of a journey to Florence than of going to York races; and therefore I am glad you will not only have the comfort of seeing him, but of hearing

[2] When he negotiated with the King without the consent of Lord Rockingham. *Walpole.*

a thousand things expounded that cannot be detailed in a letter. The new system will probably be adjusted by that time. I shall desire him to carry you the detail of General Murray's trial, which I myself shall never read. It was an incident that made no impression here. This great city is wonderfully curious, though exceedingly indifferent. The latter complexion occasions the former. Everybody wants to hear something new every day, no matter whether good or bad. They forget it next day, and inquire again for news. At this moment every man's mouth and ear is open to learn the new administration—none can tell yet; still, dispositions of places are invented and circulated: yet, excepting interested politicians, nobody really cares who is to go in or out; and, when the change is completed, it will be forgotten in a week. This was exactly the case in March and in June last. Our levity is unlike that of the French: they turn everything into a jest, an epigram, or a ballad; we are not pleasant, but violent, and yet remember nothing for a moment. This was not our character formerly. Perhaps the prostitution of patriotism, and the daily and indiscriminate publications of abuse on all the world, have, the former made virtue suspected, and the latter made discredit so general, that virtue is either not believed, or has no authority. Can the people be much attached to any man, if they think well of none? Can they hate any man superlatively, if they think ill of all? In my own opinion, we have no positive character at present at all. We are not so bad as most great nations have been when sinking. We have no excessive vices, no raging animosities. A most absurd and most disgraceful civil war produced no commotions. A peace, far from glorious, to be sure, and condemned, pleases many, seriously provokes very few. It will sink into silent contempt, as soon as the new ministers are appointed. The Peace of Paris, more ignominious as

the termination of a most triumphant war, was scarce mentioned after the preliminaries had been approved in Parliament. If you find these features resembling those of former England, then I am in the wrong to think our national character altered.

There has been a deep snow, which has prevented my going out, or having seen anybody to-day; so, if there is anything new, I hope your nephew will write it. Adieu!

2393. To the Rev. William Mason.

March 7, 1783.

Your coalition with Johnson[1] is super-excellent, yet have I lived so long and seen so many strange evolutions, that, do you know, I should not be quite surprised if it were a reality, and not a parody? Chaos is in good earnest come again, and were not the nation at once so dissipated, and so detached from all esteem for persons, which it is impossible to feel, I should expect very serious consequences. But as in the primitive chaos, though all the elements were at strife, we are not told of any bloodshed, that neither the fire was drowned, nor the water boiled over, I conclude the present confusion will subside in a new *creation*; that the devil will steal into paradise, that the new couple will be driven out of it again, after they have filled their bellies, and that things will go on as they were in the beginning, are now, and shall be for evermore. Such being my idea of politics, I should if I had not, as you know, already bidden adieu to them, take a still more solemn leave of them now. I am willing

Letter 2393.—Hitherto printed as part of the letter to Mason of Feb. 10, 1783. (See *Notes and Queries*, Nov. 3, 1900.)

1 'I have gone a great way towards a literary coalition with Dr. Johnson; our object is no less than the complete administration of the Blue Stocking Club.' (Mason to Walpole, March 5, 1783.)

to die with what little honesty and consistency I have. How that would be possible I do not see, when all principles are confounded. One cannot be of a party by oneself, and where is that one to which I would say I appertain? To none; absolutely to none. Nor would that be the strongest objection. To stand single may be the honestest part, but then it must be a negative one. What can an insulated man do? no good. If connected, I fear (as my conscience is a little timid) he may do more harm than good. In short, the more I reflect, the less am I satisfied with the profession of politician, and therefore my remnant shall not be discoloured with it. Personal interests or personal passions will creep into the paste, and perhaps leaven the whole lump. I wash my hands of it.

I have not seen the new edition of your *Garden* advertised, or should certainly have sent for it. I do want you to give me three or four impressions of your own head and of Gray's—I mean of the small quartos. You know the principal occupation of my dotage is *making books*, that is, dressing them up with prints and pretty bindings; a charming amusement for a superannuated child, and which neither hurts the eyes nor employs the head. Your *Fresnoy* is to be decorated proudly. Thus I have answered your kind question and told you that I am very well, in short, a very fine boy of my age, though I have neither cut any teeth, nor lost any; my hand, too, though very rickety, you see can walk alone again. Adieu!

Yours entirely,

H. Walpole.

2394. To Sir Horace Mann.

March 10, 1783.

I began a letter to you yesterday sevennight, intending to send it away the next day: so I did on Friday, by which

time I concluded a new administration would be settled. That is not just the case yet; and therefore I have laid aside my commenced letter (which, however, you may get some time or other), and begin another—just to stay your stomach till I can tell you something positive. To-day I shall not utter a word of politics, as they might be addled by to-morrow.

My old aunt, and your old acquaintance, Lady Walpole, died yesterday morning at past eighty-seven. She has been quite blind for some years; but so well, that, having a fever last year of which she recovered, she said it was the first money she had ever laid out with an apothecary for herself. I sat an hour with her three weeks ago, and never saw her look better, nor possess her senses more.

Another person you once knew died at the same time in a more dismal way—*à l'anglaise.* Mr. Skrine shot himself; they say, from distressed circumstances.

Tuesday, 11th.

My vow of not uttering a word of politics being confined in the literal sense to yesterday, I shall open my pen's mouth again so far as to tell you that the interministerium still exists, as far as nonentity is a being. Do not imagine that we feel any inconvenience from the administration wanting a head. Everything goes on more quietly for that defect. The Parliament sits—business is done without obstruction, for nobody can be opposed when there is nobody to be opposed; the inference I doubt, is, that a minister is opposed, not for what he *does*, but for what he *is*. In the fable of Æsop, the head and members were starved out when they would not feed the belly: here we now find that, if the belly and *members* are well crammed, they can jog on mighty comfortably without the head.

The newspapers will tell you that tenders of the first place have been made to various persons, who have declined

it, and that a veto has been put on the only person who is ready to accept[1]. These reports I neither affirm nor deny; for I know nothing but town-talk. You would naturally ask me, 'But what do you believe?' I reply, 'Nothing!' When people are quite ignorant of what is doing, instead of confessing their ignorance, they coin knowledge and invent something that others at least may believe. Thus I have been told positively for this last fortnight of so many Premiers being appointed, that at last I have determined to disbelieve anything I hear, but to believe nothing. In that suspense I leave you for the present. Excepting a million of lies, you know as much as the whole town of London does; and, if there are half a dozen truths amidst that inundation of falsehoods, my spectacles are not good enough to discriminate the precious stones from the counterfeits; and, as I am too old to wear jewels, it is pretty indifferent to me which are diamonds, and which Bristol-stones. I only take care not to send you bits of glass. Adieu!

2395. To Sir Horace Mann.

Sunday, March 2, 1783.

[This is the letter mentioned in the preceding to have been begun, but it was not sent away till March 18th.]

It is not quite new in this country, though not so frequent as in your neighbourhood, to see a *sede vacante*: here, I call it an interministerium. There is this difference between the two vacuums; at Rome, the pretence is, that the Holy Ghost does not know its own mind till the *majority* fixes it. Here, the *majority* has decided; but in-

Letter 2394.—[1] The Duke of Portland. The long suspense was occasioned by the King's unwillingness to take the Duke of Portland and the old Whigs for ministers. *Walpole.*

spiration has not yet given the fiat. As even what passes within the Conclave is known, or guessed, or reported falsely; so here people pretend to account for the present hiatus in government. I do not warrant what I am going to tell you; I only send you the creed of the day.

Lord Shelburne resigned the Treasury last Monday, and the Duke of Portland was ready to take his place; being named thereto by the united factions of the Cardinals Fox and North. The Holy Ghost is said to be highly displeased with that junction; and, instead of imposition of hands on the elect, offered the ministerial tiara to the juvenile Cardinal, William Pitt; who, after pondering in his heart so effulgent a call, and not finding his vocation ratified by a majority of the Sacred College, humbly declined the splendid nomination on Thursday last. Clouds and darkness have hung over the last two days. Here I pause till the sky clears: at present, I know no more than the Pope of Rome what is doing.

Wednesday night, 5th.

This letter, which was to have speeded to you last night, could not get its complement, the political atmosphere being still overcast. Cardinal North was summoned to the Vatican on Monday, where much entreaty was used to detach him from his new confederation, but in vain; and he was dismissed with a declaration, that any terms should be granted, except the disbursement of St. Peter's pence by the head of an heretical faction[1]. The Cardinal had another short audience last night, with as little effect. This morning, it is said, the young Cardinal I mentioned, and two others, have been closeted; and there ends the second part of this interlude, as far as I know. If things remain in suspense

LETTER 2395. — [1] The King told Lord North 'that he would not put the Treasury into the hands of the head of a faction.' (*Last Journals*, vol. ii. p. 597.)

till Friday night, I shall still withhold this: you had better remain in negative than in positive uncertainty, unless your nephew gives you any hint. For my part, I do not choose, at such a crisis, to divulge our bickerings, though they can be no secret.

March 13th.

I began this letter, as you perceive, a fortnight ago; but we have remained in such confusion till yesterday, that truly I did not care to give you an account that might delight foreigners, and would give you an anxiety that I could neither remove, nor cared to explain. I shall now send you a few lines to-morrow, that will make you easy by announcing a settlement; but, as your nephew will set out for Florence next week, I will commit this to him; which will give you a fuller explanation, though it will be longer before you receive it.

In short, whether Lord Shelburne retained his influence in the closet, or endeavoured to preserve it; or whether mere aversion to Charles Fox and the Cavendishes, who govern the remnant of the Rockingham faction, was the cause; Lord Shelburne, the Chancellor, the Lord Advocate, and some of the old Bedford squadron, seconded the King's wishes to patch up a succedaneous administration, though without Lord Shelburne for ostensible minister. The first idea was to offer the Treasury to young Pitt, whose vanity was at first naturally staggered; but his discretion got the better, and he declined. It was then offered to Lord Gower, who had not resolution enough to accept. At last, Lord North, as I told you, was sent for, and it was proposed to him earnestly to resume his old rudder; but he avowed his new alliance with Fox, and proposed the Duke of Portland. This was absolutely rejected; and a resolution was declared of not appointing the Duke Premier, though all the rest of his party might have places. This strange

interval lasted from Sunday night to the Tuesday sevennight following. All men were in amazement, and nobody knew how this Gordian knot would be cut. I believe it was expected, perhaps hoped, that Mr. Fox and his associates would fly out into violence; which would revolt a very fluctuating House of Commons, in which the Tories, though they had followed Lord North, their old commander, against Lord Shelburne, might repent their desertion of prerogative, and leave the new allies, North and Fox, once more in a minority: but *these* were too cunning to precipitate their plan, and kept their temper; while the crown received so many rebuffs, and found it impossible to form any other ministry, that at last Lord North was again sent for, and ordered to form a new arrangement according to the system he had adopted and proposed; but was desired to make it broad enough, that there might not be another change soon[2]. Whether the latter part of the command will be easily executed, I don't know. The coalition of North and Fox has given extreme offence reciprocally to many of their friends, and I believe is not very popular in the country; nay, I question whether they are very sure of either House of Parliament. Of the court they cannot be, which has shown so much aversion; and, as in March last, has affronted the Duke of Portland, like Lord Rockingham, by appointing another person to treat with him. Many expect the two allies will break again—I own I do not believe that: but as few, by the reduction of employments, and by the fullness of other places, whence the present occupiers will be removed, can be provided for, I foresee a pretty strong opposition; and young Pitt, whose character is as yet little singed, and who has many youths,

[2] This was certainly an insincerity to lull the allies asleep, as appeared nine months afterwards; and, even so early as the following August, the King dropped hints of his meditating another change. *Walpole.*

of his own age and of parts, attached to him, will be ready to head a new party. There are many other circumstances, too long to detail, that will favour my ideas. Your nephew will supply a verbal comment; but pray remember to send me *this letter*, and the rest of mine, by him.

The Peace and the new arrangement are certainly fortunate. A duration of obstinacy against the latter might have endangered the former. Our situation, however, is far from admirable; and fallen we are very low in every respect—nay, have no symptoms of a nation returning to its senses, and thinking of repairing its errors and recovering its consideration. Mr. Fox, I am persuaded, had he full authority, is most capable of undertaking such a task; as, of all men living, Lord Shelburne has shown himself the most insufficient. Every day of his administration produced new proofs of his folly, duplicity, indiscretion, contradictions, and disregard of all principles. He was fallen into the lowest contempt, even before his power was shaken. He will have full time to reflect on his errors; and yet hitherto he has seemed insensible of them, and incapable of correcting them. The Duke of Portland is a cipher. Lord North has lately shown himself a dexterous politician for his own interests, though a most fatal minister to us, and uncreditable to himself, and not very grateful to his master. Still, such was our blindness, he was the most popular man in England, even after his fall; but that vision is dispelled, and he will be seen hereafter in his true colours, as a bad minister and a selfish man, who had abilities enough to have made a very different figure. Adieu!

March 18th.

P.S. I have been telling you what may be true; but at least it is not so yet. The administration that was thought settled, is not. The Duke of Portland was invited, and

Walker & Cockerell Ph. Sc

George, Prince of Wales
(afterwards George IV)
from a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

refused in the same breath; that is, was ordered to send his list *in writing*, and would not: and, lest any part should be in the right, he and his new friend Lord North are not agreed on their list; and yet they and their sovereign have squabbled about part of that unsettled list. He has insisted on keeping the Chancellor, they on dismissing him. Why? oh, thereby hangs a tale, more serious than all the rest. George the *Fourth*[3] has linked himself with Charles Fox. The Chancellor was consulted (by the King), and is said to have expressed himself in terms that would be treason, if the present tense were the future[4]; but, that I may not be in the same præmunire, I leave to your nephew to expound the rest by word of mouth. I expect him every minute to receive my packet. This letter, I hope, and he, will give you a clue that may make you understand my future dispatches, which will be circumspect, not so much against home inspection as foreign. We are in such a distracted state, and may continue so, that I shall avoid touching on our confusions more than shall be too notorious to be concealed. As to who are or shall be ministers, I care very little. All parties are confounded and intermixed, without being reconciled. My belief is, that new distinctions will arise, and, after some scene of anarchy, a new era. You may depend upon it, that I shall have nothing to do with it; and consequently shall know nothing but outlines. I withdraw myself more and more from the world, have few connections left, and despise supremely such old simpletons as thrust them-

[3] The Prince of Wales. His connection with Charles Fox made the King detest the latter, and was the principal cause of his dislike to the proposed administration. *Walpole.*

[4] That is, if the Prince were King. *Walpole.*—With regard to Fox's influence over the Prince, the King was reported to have asked Thurlow and Ashburton '"what redress he could have against a man who alienated from him the affection of his son?" Rumour added that the blunt and surly Chancellor had replied, "that he would have no peace till his son and Fox were secured in the Tower."' (*Last Journals*, vol. ii. p. 599.)

selves amongst generations two or three degrees younger. If one outlives one's cotemporaries, it is no reason for supposing one shall cut a new set of teeth.

2396. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

March 11, 1783.

I hope, Madam, you have been rejoiced at the appointment of every new Prime Minister that we have had for this last fortnight—Mr. W. Pitt, the Duke of Portland, Lord Temple, Lord Gower, and Lord Thurlow. There may have been more for aught I know; as it is no business of mine, and as Lord Ossory is in town, I left it to him to make the several notifications; and it is well I did, or I might have distracted you, as I should perhaps have sent you one administration and he another by the same post. At present there is no Premier at all, at least there was not a quarter of an hour ago; nay, they say there never is to be another; and, as I am the only unadulterated Whig left in England, I am prodigiously glad of it. You cannot imagine how much better things go on. Seconds, and thirds, and fourths execute all business without molestation; for, as every man thinks himself fit to be first, nobody condescends to oppose seconds and thirds: and as seconds and thirds never presume to do more than their duty, nobody has any fault to find; and no mortal ever finds fault without cause. The only present grievance is, the want of levees and Drawing-rooms. All the world is eager to pay court to their sovereign on the abolition of he odious office of Prime Minister; but as all the world have thronged to offer their compliments on the accession of every new Premier, their present contradictory homage is justly disdained; and, as we can go on without a First Lord of the Treasury, we certainly might exist without

levees or Drawing-rooms—why do people go to them, but because they hope to be rewarded by a First Lord of the *Treasury*? In the East, where all are excellent subjects, they scarce ever see their monarch, except at the mosque or at an oratorio. In short, whether Whig or High Churchman, one must be pleased with the present dispensation; I am only afraid that, such is our levity, we shall grow tired of this mundane theocracy when the novelty is over; and, like the frogs, neither be content with the log, nor the stork, nor the stagnant pool.

I am grown prodigiously older within these two days, Madam. I have been for some time the patriarch of a long line of nephews and nieces, and of great-nephews and nieces; yet still, when I had a mind to give myself juvenile airs, I could say, 'I have been to see my aunt.' Alas! that consolation is gone! The old Lady Walpole died on Sunday at eighty-seven. Did I ever tell your Ladyship a trait of her, that was very respectable? She was daughter of a French refugee staymaker. When Ambassadress, the late Queen of France was surprised at her speaking French so well, and asked her how it happened. She replied, 'Madame, c'est ce que je suis Françoise.'—'Vous!' said the Queen, 'et de quelle famille?'—'D'aucune, Madame,' replied my aunt. Would not one rather have made that answer than have been able to say, a Montmorenci? The French Ambassadress here at the same time, who was the tally of my aunt too, in birth, and in quickness of reply, though not of such sublime modesty, was an heiress also of very low extraction. The Maréchal de Broglie[1], her husband, talking of his children, and to what professions he destined them, said, 'Et pour le cadet, je l'aurois fait Chevalier de Malte; mais Madame,' pointing to his wife, 'nous a fermé toutes les

LETTER 2396. — [1] François Marie (1671–1745), Duc de Broglie, Maréchal de France, Ambassador in England in 1724.

portes.' She replied, 'Oui, jusqu'à celles de l'hôpital.' Apropos of *bons mots*, has our Lord told you that George Selwyn calls Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt the idle and the industrious apprentices? If he has not, I am sure you will thank me, Madam.

Oh, stay; there is a Prime Minister just made—not indeed at the head of the Treasury, nor one that has either salary or perquisites, but who consequently would be much more in earnest in declining the honour, if he dared: in short, alas! your Ladyship's gazetteer is grown such a favourite at a certain tiny court[2] in Cavendish Square, that he is called to sit at the board three nights in a week. I really think that I should *accept*, if I was sent for to the Queen's House, if only to recover my liberty, as Lord North set a precedent of being as idle as one pleases.

2397. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

March 13, 1783, New Style.

I conclude, in the language of the day, that our Lord has been *sent for*, and that I shall tell your Ladyship very stale news when I acquaint you that the Duke of Portland is minister. I should tell you more than I know if I added another promotion, for, though I heard that last night, it is now past four in the afternoon, and, simple as I sit here, I have not learnt, nay, not inquired a syllable more, nor have seen a two-legged creature to-day but a crooked painter. Perhaps there is not another gentleman or gentlewoman in London equally ignorant. Nay, as I go again to *my* court this evening, where we have not the best intelligence in the world, it may be to-morrow morning before I know whether the old Duchess of Portland or Lord Guilford is to be Queen-Dowager—the most important point to

[2] That of the Princess Amelia.

me, as they are my play-fellows. I sat with the former candidate till past eleven last night at Mrs. Delany's, and had a mind to ask for Margaret my housekeeper to be necessary-woman instead of Jenkinson, with a pension of only a thousand a year, which, according to Colonel Barré's way of calculating, she might have had, if my father had continued Prime Minister to this time.

I think your Ladyship may now steal into Grosvenor Place, without hearing *odd man* called over the way. As soon as all the *sorties* and *entrées* have been made, and the several parties have visited reciprocally, things will fall into their usual channel, and the nearest relations will not hate one another more than usual. Nay, '*amidst the changes and chances* of this mortal life' (a phrase which one should think had been coined at Brooks's), the reverse of an old proverb has just taken date. *The dearest friends must part* was an obvious and trite old saying; *the bitterest foes may embrace* is newer, and not so trist a reflection: I love gay and good-humoured maxims. If the refinements of society have corrupted the heart, they have, at least, improved the temper. There are no deadly feuds now. People love and hate one another so often, that they go into friendship or out, as easily as into or out of mourning; and, within this twelvemonth, for almost as short a time. Pray, Madam, don't be so vulgar as to stay in the country, because there is somebody or other here that you are afraid of meeting. What an old-fashioned prejudice! Does one like anybody the less, because one dislikes that person? There is not a monarch in Europe that cannot conquer his aversion in *seventeen days*[1]; and shall a subject be allowed greater latitude? I know your Ladyship's are not antipa-

LETTER 2397.—[1] The 'interministerium' lasted seventeen days, at the end of which period the King brought himself to accept the Duke of Portland as minister.

thies, but very contrary awkwardnesses; but you must get over them. Lions and lambs, doves and serpents, now trot in the same harness, and it does one's heart good to see them. They will all go into the ark together on Monday, the sun will shine, and some evanescent rainbow will promise that the ministry shall never be drowned again.

Here ends the first chapter of Exodus, which, in court Bibles, always precedes Genesis.

2398. To the Duchess of Gloucester.

Thursday, March 13, 1783.

Your Royal Highness may be surprised, Madam, that after announcing the fall of Lord Shelburne, I should not have told you who was his successor. I had more reasons than one, like the Mayor of Orleans; though that one were sufficient, viz. his having no successor till yesterday. I knew Lord Cholmondeley had written to the Duke; and in truth I did not care to tell foreign post-offices, though no secret, the confusion we were in. I had rather anybody should publish our disgraces than I. Nay, I should perhaps have sent false news, for several appointments of Premiers were believed, each for a day, and proved false the next. The post was certainly offered to and declined by young Mr. Pitt, to Lord North, Lord Gower, and, it was said, to Lord Thurlow. At last, after a vacancy of seventeen days, Lord North was summoned yesterday, and ordered to make his proposed arrangement; in consequence of which the Duke of Portland was sent for next, and is First Lord of the Treasury. I have not yet heard the other changes or dispositions, but suppose we shall know the principal before this shall set out to-morrow.

Letter 2398.—Stated by Cunningham to have been 'endorsed, but not finished nor sent.'

There have been cart-loads of abuse, satiric prints, and some little humour on the coalition of Lord North and Mr. Fox; nor has Lord Shelburne been spared before or since his exit. It is remarkable that the counties and towns are addressing thanks for the Peace, which their representatives have condemned. George Selwyn has been happiest, as usual, in his *bons mots*. He calls Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt the idle and industrious apprentices. It is a coarser and much poorer piece of wit, I don't know whose, that the Duke of Portland is a fit *block* to hang *Whigs* on. You have seen in the papers, Madam, the new peerages and pensions, and therefore I do not mention them. I very likely repeat what you hear from your daughters and others, but what can I tell but what everybody knows?

My aunt Lady Walpole is dead, and they say has left but little, and that little to her two daughters[1]. Mr. Skrine has shot himself, it is supposed, from excruciating illnesses. Old Lady Jerningham is recovering from a most violent palsy. General Conway has had as violent a St. Antony's fire, but is well again. I will reserve the rest of my paper for new promotions.

I never deal in scandal, Madam, but one may make use of it as an antidote to itself. You must have seen in the papers much gross abuse on a pretty ingenious friend of mine for a low amour with one of her own servants, for which I seriously believe there was not the smallest foundation. The charge is now removed to much higher quarters, which, at least, are more creditable. The town has for these ten days affirmed that the Lord husband was going to cite into the *spiritual* court the head of the *temporal* one —nay, and the third chief of the Common Law—nay, and the second of the spiritual one too. Such conquests

[1] Hon. Henrietta Louisa Walpole, d. unmarried 1824; Hon. Anne Walpole, d. unmarried 1797.

would be very honourable in the records of love, and the first very diverting, as the hero has so much distinguished himself by severity on bills of divorce. I do not warrant any of these stories, but totally discredit that of the domestic. A prude may begin with a footman, and a gallant woman may end with one, but a pretty woman who has so many slaves in high life, does not think of a livery, especially where vanity is the principal ingredient in her composition.

2399. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, March 13, 1783.

I do not know whether this letter will not be still shorter than my last; but your nephew sets out next week, and will give you full details of the interlude, for it is now finished. Lord North received command yesterday to form a new administration according to his own proposal, of which he is *not* to be the chief but the Duke of Portland. I have not yet heard the other arrangements, for the inter-ministerium, which had lasted seventeen days, ceased but yesterday morning, and was not divulged till the evening.

We shall now, I hope, have a settlement for some time—I mean, it is necessary to the country. To me revolutions are but a scene that passes like so many others to which I have been witness, and in which I am concerned but as one of the people. I do not forget how soon I am to leave the theatre, even as a spectator. I rejoice in the Peace as a happy *dénouement* of one tragedy. What is to follow, I trust, will only be a comedy (like those of other pacific periods), as politics are in my eyes, when not bloodied by war.

Friday, 14th.

I believe I shall not be able to send you the new litany

to-night: it had not received the imprimatur yesterday, as there must be two responses to adjust, for those who are to be dismissed, *From our enemies defend us, O Lord!* and for the candidates who are to succeed them, *We beseech Thee to hear us.* The town, who never takes so much time to deliberate, disposed the whole arrangement in a moment, though every editor gave different readings. I shall give you neither the one nor the other, as most may be apocryphal, but wait for the genuine edition *in usum Delphini.*

We have received the dreadful accounts of the devastation of Messina[1], &c.: I say no more, for I could only detail the commonplace reflections that present themselves on such calamities.

2400. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

March 16, 1783.

When Lord Ossory is in town, Madam, I shall certainly not pretend to send you politics; no, not even abortions of them. At any time, I know none but what I learn by sitting here behind the bar of my own coffee-house. Indeed, I only write now to say that you extended the ideas of my last farther than I meant; I only alluded to a house very near me[1], whither I thought it might be awkward to you to go just at this turn of the tide. I shall say nothing more on any such subject. You ought to and must judge by your own feelings.

I do not well recollect how I applied *Exodus before Genesis* in my last, and believe it was too far-fetched, as it appeared an enigma. I think it was used on the change of the ministry, and that I referred to the derivation of the two

Letter 2399.—[1] On Feb. 5, 1783, the city of Messina was almost destroyed by an earthquake. Great damage was also done in Calabria.

Letter 2400.—[1] Shelburne House.

words, which are Greek. *Exodus* signifies *a going out*, and *Genesis a generation.* Now a new ministry cannot be born till the old one is gone out; and, therefore, in the Red Book or court Bible, Exodus must precede Genesis. I find that *much learning had made Paul mad*, and that I talked nonsense by talking Greek. I will not be so apostolic again when I am speaking on heathen topics.

As I have not much faith, Madam, in sentiments after matrimony, I suspect that your Bedfordshire husband, who would not go to see Mrs. Siddons without his wife, is a hypocrite, and meant to persuade her that he never saw any woman *in Drury Lane* without her being present.

I don't know whether I ought to afflict your Ladyship with the dreadful account I received last night from Sir Horace Mann of the devastation of Sicily and Calabria, nor where you will find horror enough adequate to the calamity! What do you think of one hundred and thirty-two cities, towns, and castles totally destroyed? This is literally sweeping

Towns to the grave, and nations to the deep.

There are vanished besides two islands and a whole river! One Calabrian Prince has lost seventeen manors. Mr. Swinburne[2] is become an antediluvian historian. *Nunc seges est ubi Troja fuit!* How diminutive does a change of ministry appear, when nature overturns two countries in a couple of nights!

2401. To Sir Horace Mann.

Thursday, April 3, 1783.

I MARK the very day of the week on which I begin my letter, because of late nothing has proved true; at least, not

[2] Henry Swinburne, author of *Travels in the Two Sicilies* (1777–80).

lasting for four-and-twenty hours. For these three weeks I have said to everybody that called on me and told me news, 'I beg your pardon, but I will not believe anything you tell me: all I can do is to disbelieve.' Well! at last there is an administration—it *has* kissed hands; and therefore, were it to be destroyed to-morrow, it will have been. In a word, Lord North was sent for once more on Tuesday night, and was ordered to tell the Duke of Portland that his Grace's arrangement would be accepted. Accordingly, the new Cabinet kissed hands yesterday: the Duke of Portland, as First Lord of the Treasury; Lord John Cavendish, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lord Stormont, President of the Council; Lord North and Mr. Fox, Secretaries of State; Lord Carlisle, Privy Seal; Lord Keppel, First Lord of the Admiralty. This is all I know yet: for reports, even crediting, I should not repeat them till they have taken *seisin*; as on a change of administration, places, like insects, undergo a variety of transformations, at least in the eyes of rumour before the metamorphoses are completed. As my letter will not leave London till to-morrow, I may be able to tell you more. I sent you a key by your nephew, which will unlock much of what is past.

In the meantime let us talk of Cav. Mozzi. I have received your letter, with his enclosed to Mr. Duane; which I sent immediately, and have seen the latter this morning. He is to appoint Mr. Sharpe and Lucas to meet him here, if they can, on Monday or Tuesday next; and when we have heard all they have to say, Mr. Duane and I shall talk it over together, and, I hope, give a more favourable decision than Cav. Mozzi is willing to submit to; for I think Lucas has stretched his demands very far; and which I shall not allow, unless Mr. Duane thinks them just. Since Mozzi has so long delayed coming, I see no occasion for it now. Indeed, the walls of Florence seem

impassable, or your principied Earl[1] would not have been riveted there so long. How strange he is! neither parent nor children can draw him from that specific spot! But we are a lunatic nation!

They tell us that the Sicilian and Neapolitan tragedy has not been so very dreadful as at first represented. I hope my friend, the professor of earthquakes, Sir William Hamilton, will give a full account of it, and not treat it with your Pope's indifference[2].

Mr. Fox is again *your* principal, and a very agreeable one he will be: there is no walk in which *he* will not shine.

Friday, 4th.

The Duke of Richmond[3] resigned yesterday. Of new preferments to-day produced but the following: Burke, Paymaster; Spanish Charles Townshend[4], Treasurer of the Navy; Eden, Vice-Treasurer of Ireland; Lord Surrey, Frederick Montagu, and Sir Grey Cooper[5], Lords of the Treasury; and John Townshend[6], of the Admiralty. These are nothing to you, but your nephew will like to know. I tell you none of the Who-are-to-be's, to save myself the trouble of contradiction, if I should misinform you.

I believe some of your earthquake weather has reached hither; for it has been so warm for these five days, that, on

LETTER 2401.—[1] Earl Cowper, made Prince Nassau by the Emperor. He had lately sent his children to England to be educated, yet did not follow them himself. *Walpole.*

[2] When the news of the earthquake reached Rome 'the Governor proposed to the Pope to shut up the Theatres, and to prohibit the diversions of the Carnival; but his Holiness would not hear of it. He has a trite expression, which he frequently makes use of: *Digitus Dei, hic est!* he applied it on this occasion, and seemed to think that it was a very proper Chastisement for the Suppression of the Inquisition in Sicily.' (*Mann and Manners*, vol. ii. p. 398.)

[3] Master General of the Ordnance.

[4] He had been Secretary of Embassy at Madrid.

[5] Third Baronet, M.P. for Saltash. He had previously been Secretary to the Treasury. He died in 1801.

[6] Hon. John (afterwards Lord John) Townshend (1757–1833), M.P. for Cambridge University, and son of fourth Viscount (afterwards first Marquis) Townshend.

opening my window to the Square this morning, I found a large wasp on the outside, which soon flew away. Adieu!

2402. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, April 5, 1783.

You know I do not wait for answers, Madam, when I have anything worth telling you. In truth I go so very little into the world, that unless I hear news in my own room, I know but a small part of what is passing. Of late I have been quite tired of rumours and false reports; nor could give accounts of an egg that might be hatched or addled the next hour; and which, though set under a brood hen, I could not tell but might produce a goose or a guinea-fowl. Besides, Lord Ossory could give you much quicker intelligence than I, and more authentic: nor at this moment can I specify the preferments but of those who have actually kissed hands. Yet of one thing I am sure, which is, that General Conway is delighted with Mr. Fitzpatrick's being Secretary at War, and will do everything he can to accommodate him.

I hope you were not alarmed at the attempt on your house. I do expect that we shall neither be safe at home nor abroad. Everything proves that man is an aurivorous animal, and will have its food wherever it grows.

I heard and saw the Misses Fitzpatrick[1] t'other night, and they assured me your Ladyship will be in town at the end of this month. I own, as you have stayed so long, I doubt it, but shall be happy to be mistaken.

The weather is so delicious, that I propose going to Strawberry next week for some days, and unless it changes to cold, to be chiefly there. I grow so antiquated and

Letter 2402. — [1] Probably the daughters of Lord Ossory's uncle, Hon. Richard Fitzpatrick.

superannuated, that I am fit for nothing but to be laid up in my own Gothic collection. My politics ended with the American war; I shall tap none more. The greatest folly in my eyes is that of old people who cling to the last plank, when they may be washed off by the next wave.

2403. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, April 17, 1783.

I am a little of your Ladyship's opinion, that the new administration is not founded upon a rock; however, if they fall, I see no reason for expecting any other to be more permanent. The cards have been so thoroughly shuffled, that it will require several deals before they get into suits again.

I know nothing, Madam, that will make a paragraph. I have been for three days at Strawberry, which does not brighten my intelligence; but you are coming yourself, and I believe will not find that I am particularly ignorant. All I have heard, except politics, of which I am tired, is, that Lady Frances Scott is to be married to Mr. Douglas, the Douglas[1]. She was a great friend of Lady Lucy, and it is a proof of *his* sense, that he can forgive her person in favour of her merit.

In a dearth of English novelties, perhaps, Madam, you may be willing to learn the latest mode at Paris. It is, to speak broken French—not to ridicule Britons, but in lowly imitation of us. I conclude the Duke of Manchester[2] will be elected into the French Academy on the recommendation of his barbarisms. Well, it is consolatory in our fall to be

Letter 2403.—[1] Archibald James Edward Douglas (1748–1827), of Bothwell and Douglas Castles, Lanark. He was the successful claimant in the 'Douglas Cause,' and was created (July 8, 1790) Baron Douglas, of Douglas. The 'Lady Lucy' mentioned above was his first wife, Lady Lucy Graham, daughter of second Duke of Montrose. She died in 1780.

[2] Ambassador at Paris.

still admired and aped! The Duc de Chartres is coming to study us, as Pythagoras and Solon travelled to Egypt, and I hope will carry back every monkey-worship that he finds established on the banks of the Thames. Oh, I fib; Lord Mount-Edgecumbe has just been here, and says the King of France, he in France, will not allow the Duc de Chartres to come hither, as the Count d'Artois has the same ambition of improving himself, and no king can like to be outshone by all the younger branches of his family. I am sorry Lady Anne will not see those two Rajahpouts driving themselves in gigs to Ranelagh.

2404. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, April 25, 1783.

Unless you have a mind to be Bishop of Norwich [1], Madam, I can give you no reason for hastening your arrival before Monday—not that I should fling cold water on your coming sooner were I to be in town myself; but I shall go to Strawberry to-morrow—though the weather is as bitter as it always is in Newmarket week—and not return but for my Princess's [2] Monday; and consequently shall not have the honour of kissing your Ladyship's hand till Tuesday.

It is not I, but young Mr. Horatio, who has kissed hands for a place in Chelsea College; for though *I* am much fitter for a hospital, it is not my intention to go to one through court. Another of my kin has arrived, Mr. Robert Walpole [3], from Portugal, and has brought a wife, who is to efface all Venuses and Helens past or present. I have not yet seen her, but mean to do so soon, lest she should be

Letter 2404.—[1] The bishopric of Norwich was vacant by the death of Dr. Philip Yonge on April 23, 1783.

[2] The Princess Amelia.

[3] Hon. Robert Walpole (d. 1810), fourth son of first Baron Walpole, of Wolterton, and English minister at Lisbon; m. (1780) Diana Grosett.

poisoned by some of the reigning beauties who have views on the Prince of Wales.

I have just heard that Lord Hardwicke is dead[4]. I am not sure it is true, yet it is probable. Soame Jenyns, whom I saw last night at Mrs. Delany's, said he was very ill and kept his bed. They were talking of the new administration; Jenyns said he hoped it would last at least as long as it had been in forming. In truth, I question whether it will be very vivacious. If satirical prints could dispatch them, they would be dead in their cradle; there are enough to hang a room. The last I think the best; it is called, *Heads of a new* Wig *administration on a broad bottom.* It is better composed than ordinary, and has several circumstances well imagined. The designer is one Sayer[5], a Norfolk lawyer, who drew the single figures of several members of Parliament. The woman who keeps the print-shop in Bruton Street, whence these hieroglyphics issue, says she has engraved all the drawings that are sent to her, and that she gets by them, one with another, ten pounds apiece. I hope you were charmed, Madam, by the figure of the young maiden, in Mr. Bunbury's 'Robin Gray.'

I rejoice that our correspondence ends here, for this season, Madam. How glad I shall be on Tuesday, to say, 'Go to Grosvenor Place'!

2405. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, April 30, 1783.

I FEAR poor Cavalier Mozzi will not find himself much advanced, though Mr. Duane and I have made a beginning. He might as well have a suit in Chancery, if we go no faster than we have done. Lucas has led us into a

[4] He lived until 1790.
[5] James Sayers or Sayer (1748–1823).

labyrinth of claims, and Mr. Duane, who is both upright and expert, will not be bamboozled. We sat the first morning near four hours, and then could proceed no farther, for a point of law being started, to which Mr. Duane could not agree, it was necessary to take the opinion of counsel; which Sharpe, who was present, took down to state to two of the first lawyers. All our three said we should obtain that *opinion immediately*; and *immediately* has already lasted above three weeks, and I have not heard a word from my fellow labourers.

Between Easter and Newmarket, politics have been a little at a stand: there had been vivacities in both Houses, but no division in either. The heat of the war seems likely to lie in that of the Lords. The newspapers specify the preferments: the one most difficult to be filled, the Vice-royalty of Ireland, is at last supplied by Lord Northington. Mr. Windham, whom you saw lately in Italy, is his secretary. Mr. Trevor, second son of Lord Hampden, who has been employed in Germany, is to be your neighbour at Turin. There seems to be a little suspense in Lord Mountstuart's destination to Madrid. The French Ambassador, D'Adhémar, is expected incessantly, for the Duke of Manchester is gone to Paris. It is well these articles are connected with your vocation, or they would not be worth noting: but I have nothing more material to tell you. After a war, and so many changes of administrations, it might be natural to repose a little; but perhaps we may not be arrived at a settlement yet[1].

When you wrote last, your nephew was not arrived at Florence; but I conclude he was before your letter had made ten posts; for he travels as fast as your own couriers. I shall grudge your having him for one particular day in

LETTER 2405. — [1] This proved a prophecy; the new administration did not last above nine months. *Walpole.*

next week; when Mr. Pitt is to move for the alteration of representation, against which your nephew is as zealous as I am. It will probably not be carried; but I wish it knocked on the head by as many blows as possible. Our constitution has resisted all kinds of shocks; but, if it changes itself, who can foresee the consequence? We have lost our grandeur! I hope our felicity is not to follow it! It is a disinterested wish, as most of mine are; for the progress of revolutions to come will scarce enter into the volume in which I am concerned.

The newspapers intimate that you was in the right, when you judged that the two ambitious Imperials[2] were determined to treat the Turkish empire as they did Poland, and share it between them: it seems no submissions have diverted them from their purpose; on the contrary, I suppose, have encouraged them. Formerly an emperor and empress, with no more religion than these two, would have christened it a holy war; modern rapine is more barefaced. Our nabobs do not plunder the Indies under the banners of piety like the old Spaniards and Portuguese. I call man an *aurivorous* animal. We pretend just now to condemn our own excesses, which are shocking indeed; *sed quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* A Parliament is a fine court of correction. The Lord Advocate of Scotland[3], who has sold himself over and over, is prosecuting Sir Thomas Rumbold for corruption at Madras! This Rumbold was a waiter at White's: there are two or three of like origin, who have returned from Bengal incrusted with gold and diamonds. This trial has disclosed a scene of tyranny in the East India Company itself as royally iniquitous as could issue from the council chamber of Petersburg. We

[2] Austria and Russia. *Walpole.*

[3] Henry Dundas, Esq.; who, on the coalition between Mr. Fox and Lord North, had gone over to the side of Pitt. *Walpole.*

talk and write of liberty, and plunder the property of the Indies. The Emperor destroys convents, and humbles the Pope; the Czarina preaches toleration, but protects the Jesuits; and these two philosophic sovereigns intend to divide Constantinople, after sacrificing half a million of lives! In one age, religion commits massacres; in another, philosophy. Oh, what a farce are human affairs!

2406. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, May 7, 1783.

If I could tell you *what a man might write about in these chaotic days,* I should have written to you oftener myself, but the chaos that began about this time twelvemonth disgusted me so much, as it defeated all the prospects which I had hoped though never expected to see realized, that I firmly determined to bid adieu to politics; and as nothing else worth repeating does happen, I imitated your indolence, and consequently was kind to your conscience, which must now and then reproach itself with its remissness. I did, indeed, a few days ago, begin a letter to you, but as I perceived it was almost all about myself, I left it unfinished at Strawberry, and now, on the encouragement of your letter, I shall send you this instead of it, and never finish that. Nay, another of your questions which I can answer gives me occasion to repeat the only thing in that letter which was worth your knowing.

Yes, I have told you that Barry has apotheosized you[1]—ay, and in full chorus with your beatified friends, Dr. Johnson, Soame Jenyns, Burke, and Mrs. Montagu, and with some who may be your friends too, but whose names I never heard before, nor remember now. There are two

Letter 2406. —[1] In one of the paintings executed by him to decorate the new room of the Society of Arts.

gentlewomen too, who I believe will stare as much as you at the company in which they find themselves. Had they been hurried into Charon's hoy at once, they could not be more surprised at the higgledy-piggledyhood that they would meet there. In short, these two poor gentlewomen are the Duchesses of Devonshire and Rutland, who this new master of the ceremonies to Queen Fame has ordered that well-bred usher to the graces, Dr. Johnson, to present to Mrs. Vicequeen Montagu, under whose tuition they are to be placed, who is recommended to them as a model to copy. This vision of immortality I have not yet seen, but I am dabbing my eyes with euphrasy and rue, and propose to treat them with it to-morrow. I must astringe my mouth too with alum, lest I laugh and be put into purgatory again myself, as I was for the same crime when I first saw Barry's Homeric Venus standing stark naked in front, and dragging herself up to heaven by a pyramid of her own red hair. I had never seen nor heard of the man, and unfortunately he stood at my elbow. To punish me for that unwitting crime, he clapped me into his book on painting as an admirer of the Dutch school, which others have blamed me for undervaluing. I suppose he concluded that if I laughed at bombast-frenzy, I must dote on the lowest buffoonery.

I shall be glad to learn from Lord Harcourt or Mr. Stonhewer your future plans or motions, though I probably shall not be much benefited by them. I think you would have told me, if seeing me fell within your design. The less time I have left, the more I wish to pass it with those I love, but fortune must produce that advantage if I receive it. I cannot expect that it should influence others. The summer, when I could best enjoy their company, separates me almost entirely from my friends, and I have not youth or activity enough to follow them; so that in effect the

gout or its consequences tyrannizes my whole year. But I do not complain; could one arrange one's scheme of life to one's wish, it would be but more painful to part with it; age and its attendant or concomitant deprivations reconcile one to laying down its burden. Long life is doomed to the loss of those we love, their absence therefore appears a light evil in comparison.

If Carter [2], of whom I have heard nothing, should call on me and I could recommend him, I would willingly. It is not very likely I should have an opportunity. The town is overrun with painters, as much as with disbanded soldiers, sailors, and ministers, and I doubt half of all four classes must be hanged for robbing on the highway, before the rest can get bread, or anybody else eat theirs in quiet. I shall heartily pity three of the denominations—for the fourth, compassion itself cannot make an option between the hangers and hangees; who can care whether a Ld. Ad.[3] or a Sir F. or T. R.[4] is the culprit or the executioner? Don't wonder I have done with politics, when there has been such crossing over and figuring in, that I defy prejudice itself to hold the scales with a partial hand in favour of any faction.

2407. To Sir Horace Mann.

Thursday morning, early, May 8, 1783.

I WRITE, though I wrote but last week, and rather to gratify your nephew than you. Mr. William Pitt's motion for reform of the House of Commons was rejected at past two this morning by 293 to 149. I know no particulars

[2] On May 4, 1783, Mason wrote to Walpole: 'Carter, my former servant (who I fear is now half starving in town), . . . is a good copyist in oil, and if you could recommend him to anybody who wants a picture cheaply and faithfully copied, he would answer their purpose, and be an act of charity.'

[3] Lord Advocate.

[4] Sir Thomas Rumbold.

yet, but from a hasty account in a newspaper; and to those intelligencers for the circumstances I refer you and him, as I shall not have time to-day probably to relate them after I have heard them, and must go to Strawberry Hill to-morrow morning to receive company, and this must go away to-morrow night.

This great majority will, I hope, at least check such attempts. Indeed, when 293 members dare to pronounce so firmly, it is plain that the spirit of innovation has gained but few counties; five or six at most, supposing Kent and Essex added to the *Quintuple* Alliance. That very epithet proves that the demand is confined to a small number. The object of altering the representation I think most dangerous. We know pretty well what good or evil the present state of the House of Commons can do: what an enlargement might achieve, no man can tell. Nay, allowing the present construction to be bad, it is clear that on emergencies it will do right. Were the House of Commons now existing the worst that ever was, still it must be acceptable to our reformers: for which House of Commons, since the Restoration, ever did more than tear two Prime Ministers from the crown in one year? In short, the constitution of the House of Commons I see in the same light as I do my own constitution. The gout raises inflammations, weakens, cripples; yet it purges itself, and requires no medicines. To quack it would kill me. Besides, it prevents other illnesses and prolongs life. Could I cure the gout, should not I have a fever, a palsy, or an apoplexy?

There has been but one other debate of note lately; and that was in the other House, when Lord Shelburne opposed the loan, and exposed himself egregiously. He moved that all loans should be applied to the National Debt, which was an Iricism in terms; that is, to lessen a debt by borrowing more. Yet his rhodomontade on

himself was still more extravagant. He vaunted his popularity, and said he was adored; yet it is neither more nor less than true, that he was hooted out of the administration by all mankind. His falsehoods, flatteries, duplicity, insincerity, arrogance, contradictions, neglect of his friends, with all the kindred of all those faults, were the daily topics of contempt and ridicule; and his folly shut his eyes, nor did he perceive—surely, does not yet perceive—that so very rapid a fall must have been owing to his own incapacity.

The King has lost another child, Prince Octavius; a lovely boy, they say, of whom both their Majesties were dotingly fond. When Prince Alfred died, the King said, 'I am very sorry for Alfred; but, had it been Octavius[1], I should have died too.'

We have another Prince arrived, the Duc de Chartres, of whom I need say nothing: you have seen him, I believe. Nor have I time now for more; only to trouble you with a commission, if you can execute it. I saw the other day a book much to my taste, and which I never saw before. It is called Fatti, or Fasti, Farnesiani, I am not sure which[2]. It is a thin and not large folio, and contains the history of the house of Farnese in prints; taken, I believe, from one of their villas. There is the marriage of Horatio Farnese[3] and the daughter of Henry the Second of France. In short, it is full of portraits and ceremonies of that time, and I should be most glad to have one, if you can procure it; though, as it came out so long ago, it may be scarce, even at Parma or Rome. If it is not—if it is common—I should wish for two copies; yet, do not attempt two, if not quite

LETTER 2407. — [1] The King's youngest surviving son, aged four years and a quarter.

[2] It is called *Fatti Farnese*, and contains prints from the paintings by Taddeo and Frederic Zucchero, in the Palace of Caprarola. *Walpole.*

[3] Orazio Farnese (d. 1554), Duke of Castro; m. (1552) Diane, natural daughter of Henry II of France. She married secondly the Duc de Montmorency.

easily attained. Adieu! I have not a moment more—but I believe there is nothing more worthy telling you.

2408. To George Colman.

Dear Sir, Strawberry Hill, May 10, 1783.

For *so* you must allow me to call you, after your being so kind as to send me so valuable and agreeable a present as your translation of Horace[1]—I wish compliment had left any term uninvaded, of which sincerity could make use without suspicion. Those would be precisely what I would employ in commending your poem; and, if they proved too simple to content my gratitude, I would be satisfied with an offering to truth, and wait for a nobler opportunity of sacrificing to the warmer virtue. If I have not lost my memory, your translation is the best I have ever seen of that difficult epistle. Your expression is easy and natural, and when requisite, poetic. In short, it has a prime merit, it has the air of an original.

Your hypothesis in your commentary is very ingenious. I do not know whether it is true, which *now* cannot be known; but if the scope of the epistle was, as you suppose, to hint in a delicate and friendly manner to the elder of Piso's sons that he had written a bad tragedy, Horace had certainly executed his plan with great address; and, I think, nobody will be able to show that anything in the poem clashes with your idea. Nay, if he went farther, and meant to disguise his object, by giving his epistle the air of general rules on poetry and tragedy, he achieved both purposes; and while the youth his friend was at once corrected and put to no shame, all other readers were kept in the dark, except you, and diverted to different scents.

Excuse my commenting your comment, but I had no

Letter 2408.—[1] A translation of Horace's *Art of Poetry*.

other way of proving that I really approve both your version and criticism than by stating the grounds of my applause. If you have wrested the sense of the original to favour your own hypothesis, I have not been able to discover your art; for I do not perceive where it has been employed. If you have given Horace more meaning than he was entitled to, you have conferred a favour on him, for you have made his whole epistle consistent, a beauty all the spectacles of all his commentators could not find out—but, indeed, *they* proceed on the profound laws of criticism, *you* by the laws of common sense, which, marching on a plain natural path, is very apt to arrive sooner at the goal, than they who travel on the Appian Way; which was a very costly and durable work, but is very uneasy, and at present does not lead to a quarter of the places to which it was originally directed.

I am, Sir, with great regard, &c.

2409. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, May 11, 1783.

This is only a codicil to my last, and shall not be longer than my testament. I have seen Lord Harcourt; he says you will not come till the Parliament rises. Were you a member of Parliament I should think you exceedingly in the right: not being so, excuse me, if I do not comprehend your reason; not that I contest it with you, for were I to convince you I should not think myself a jot nearer to persuading you.

My other reason for writing now is to do justice to your St. Peter, who has let you into heaven:—I mean Barry the painter. I have seen his Exhibition, and am much pleased with one of his eight pictures, and that one is one of the two largest, it is the 'Olympic Victors crowned.' The

colouring is cold and unanimated, but the figures are finely drawn and graceful, and the whole composition is simple and classic. Indeed, he may improve the colouring, as he says in his book that none of the pieces are finished, nor have their full *chiaroscuro*: of the rest, the 'Orpheus' is very bad, he is blind, dancing, and drunk. The 'Grecian Harvest-home,' if not a mere beginning, is poor enough. In the 'Triumph of the Thames,' Dr. Burney is not only swimming in his clothes, but playing on a harpsichord, a new kind of water-music. For Mrs. Montagu and her pupil Duchesses, and her chamberlain, the Doctor[1], they are hustled into such a mob of heads that you would think them crowding out of Ranelagh, and so unlike they are, that I did not know which was which. Then there are so many Dukes and Duchesses in robes besides, that I turned to Elysium to avoid a coronation, and there I found ye all in a masquerade, that is, you in your gown and cassock; Charles I in his Vandyck dress; Homer in rags; Leo X in his purple; the Black Prince in armour; and Ossian in flesh and blood, for even that nonentity he has sent to heaven, though indeed after obliging him previously to go and be born in Ireland. I suppose there is some such maxim of the Schoolmen as *Nemo beatificatur qui non nascitur*. There is a superb shoulder and wing of a mountainous angel that supports all heaven on its back, and a gigantic leg of another that dangles from aloof, and put me in mind of my own Otranto.

Barry has expounded all in a book which does not want sense, though full of passion and self, and vulgarisms and vanity. It is an essay to recommend himself to an establishment. He calls Mortimer[2] superior to Salvator Rosa, though his best merit was being Salvator's imitator; but

Letter 2409.—[1] Dr. Johnson.
[2] John Hamilton Mortimer (1741–1779), historical painter.

there is one thought that pleased me extremely. He says that, in his Elysium (which I did not observe, for it is impossible to see a tenth part at one view), he has represented Titian offering his pallet to Raphael.

Jarvis's window from Sir Joshua's 'Nativity[3]' is glorious. The room being darkened and the sun shining through the transparencies, realizes the illumination that is supposed to be diffused from the glory, and has a magic effect.

The Duc de Chartres is arrived. This *amiable Prince* (to talk in the style of the newspapers on like occasions) is, note it, six-and-thirty, is married, and has daughters.

Lady Clermont made a great dinner and assembly for him on Thursday. He came dirty, and in a frock with metal buttons enamelled in black, with hounds and horses, a fashion I remember here above forty years ago. On his sleeve was a horse covering a mare, and a dog and bitch equally conjugal. Not contented with this blackguardism, on Lady Duncannon's looking at the coat, he presented his sleeve and said, 'Voici la plus jolie!' The moral Madame de Genlis was mistress of this old cub and is now governess to the Princesses, his daughters; you see, we may still learn from France.

2410. To the Earl of Buchan.

My Lord, Strawberry Hill, May 12, 1783.

I did not know, till I received the honour of your Lordship's letter, that any obstruction had been given to your charter. I congratulate your Lordship and the Society on the defeat of that opposition, which does not seem to have been a liberal one. The pursuit of national antiquities has rarely been an object, I believe, with any university: why should they obstruct others from marching in that track?

[3] Now in New College Chapel, Oxford.

I have often thought the English Society of Antiquaries have gone out of their way when they meddled with Roman remains, especially if not discovered within our island. Were I to speak out, I should own that I hold most reliques of the Romans that have been found in Britain, of little consequence, unless relating to such emperors as visited us. Provincial armies stationed in so remote and barbarous a quarter as we were then, acted little, produced little worth being remembered. Tombstones erected to legionary officers and their families, now dignified by the title of *inscriptions*; and banks and ditches that surrounded camps, which we understand much better by books and plans, than by such faint fragments, are given with much pomp, and tell us nothing new. Your Lordship's new foundation seems to proceed on a much more rational and more useful plan. The biography of the illustrious of your country will be an honour to Scotland, to those illustrious, and to the authors; and may contribute considerably to the general history; for the investigation of particular lives may bring out many anecdotes that may unfold secrets of state, or explain passages in such histories as have been already written; especially as the manners of the times may enter into private biography, though before Voltaire *manners* were rarely weighed in general history, though very often the sources of considerable events. I shall be very happy to see such lives as shall be published, while I remain alive.

I cannot contribute anything of consequence to your Lordship's meditated account of John Law[1]. I have heard many anecdotes of him, though none that I can warrant, particularly that of the duel[2] for which he fled early.

LETTER 2410.—[1] John Law (1671–1729), financier.

[2] In April 1694 Law killed one Edward Wilson in a duel. Law was arrested, but escaped from prison to the Continent.

I met the other day with an account in some French literary gazette, I forget which, of his having carried off the wife of another man. Lady Catherine Law[3], his wife, lived, during his power in France, in the most stately manner. Your Lordship knows, to be sure, that he died, and is buried, at Venice. I have two or three different prints of him, and an excellent head of him in crayons by Rosalba, the best of her portraits. It is certainly very like, for, were the flowing wig converted into a female head-dress, it would be the exact resemblance of Lady Wallingford[4], his daughter, whom I see frequently at the Duchess of Montrose's, and who has by no means a look of the age to which she is arrived. Law was a very extraordinary man, but not at all an estimable one.

I don't remember whether I ever told your Lordship that there are many charters of your ancient kings preserved in the Scots College at Paris, and probably many other curiosities. I think I did mention many paintings of the old house of Lenox in the ancient castle at Aubigny.

2411. To the Hon. Thomas Fitzwilliam[1].

Berkeley Square, May 16, 1783.

I fear, Sir, that I must have appeared very ungrateful and negligent for not thanking you the instant I had the honour of receiving your letter; but the truth is, that lest I should give you the double trouble of two letters from me, I waited till your present arrived, which the carrier brought to me but half an hour ago.

[3] Daughter of Charles Knollys, titular third Earl of Banbury, and widow of a Mr. Seignior. She died in 1747.

[4] Mary Catherine Law; m. Charles Knollys, Viscount Wallingford, eldest son of titular fourth Earl of Banbury, whom he predeceased.

Letter 2411. — [1] Hon. Thomas Fitzwilliam (1755-1833), third son of sixth Viscount Fitzwilliam; succeeded his brother as ninth Viscount in 1830.

The beauty and curiosity of the basin[2], great as they are, scarce could add to my confusion. It was considerable enough before! How could I suppose myself entitled to such a favour? such an honour? I must ever be partial to my house and inconsiderable collection, since they were curious enough to amuse you, and to make you recollect their still more inconsiderable possessor. Since you have been so favourable to all three, I must flatter myself that whenever you are at Richmond, you will condescend to visit once more a house to which you have added so rare an ornament, and a person who will be very impatient to thank you in person.

The basin, which is perfect, is, I believe, Turkish. I have a small plate, but very inferior in beauty and preservation, which was given to me as Turkish; and the characters on the outside of your basin, Sir, seem to me Eastern; but I question very much whether the art of gilding the composition is not only extremely ancient, but an art lost. It resembles those Moorish mosaics which are said to adorn the Alhambra in Spain.

You have added to this great favour, Sir, by giving me a pretence for asking the honour of a visit from Lady Fitzwilliam; and if you and Mrs. Fitzwilliam[3] are ever so good as to meet her at Strawberry Hill, you will make completely happy one who has the honour to be, with the highest respect and gratitude,

Sir,

Your most obliged and most obedient humble servant,

HORACE WALPOLE.

[2] 'A bason of Turkish earthenware, gilt within; a present from Mr. Fitzwilliam.' (*Description of Strawberry Hill*, p. 416.)

[3] Agnes (d. 1817), daughter of Thomas Macclesfield, of Chesterton, Derbyshire; m. (1780) Hon. Thomas Fitzwilliam (see note 1).

2412. To George Hardinge.

Berkeley Square, May 17, 1783.

Though I shall not be fixed at Strawberry on this day fortnight, I will accept your offer, dear Sir, because my time is more at my disposal than yours, and you may not have any other day to bestow upon me later. I thank you for your second, which I shall read as carefully as I did the former. It is not your fault if you have not yet made Sir Thomas Rumbold white as driven snow to me[1]. Nature has providentially given us a powerful antidote to eloquence, or the criminal that has the best advocate would escape. But, when rhetoric and logic stagger my lords the judges, in steps prejudice, and, without one argument that will make a syllogism, confutes Messrs. Demosthenes, Tully, and Hardinge, and makes their lordships see as clearly as any old woman in England, that *belief* is a much better rule of *faith* than *demonstration.* This is just my case: I do believe, nay, and I will believe, that no man ever went to India with honest intentions. If he returns with 100,000*l.* it is plain that I was in the right. But I have still a stronger proof; my Lord Coke says, 'Set a thief to catch a thief;' my Lord Advocate says, 'Sir Thomas is a rogue.' *Ergo*—I cannot give so complete an answer to the rest of your note, as I trust I have done to your pleadings, because the latter is in print, and your note is manuscript. Now, unfortunately, I cannot read half of it; for, give me leave to say, that either your hand or my spectacles are so bad, that I generally guess at your meaning rather than decipher

Letter 2412. — [1] Hardinge was Rumbold's counsel in the Parliamentary inquiry into the latter's conduct in India.

it, and this time the context has not served me well. You shall comment on it when I see you; till when, I am, as usually,

Much yours,
H. Walpole.

2413. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, May 29, 1783.

I am glad to have nothing to tell you worth telling. We have subsided suddenly into a comfortable calm. Not only war has disappeared, but also the jostling of ministries, the hostilities of factions, the turbulence of county associations, and the mutinous spirit of disbanded regiments. The signal repulse given to the proposed reformation of Parliament seems to have dashed all that rashness of innovation. The ousted ministers do not attempt a division in either House of Parliament. In the Lords, where most vigour was expected, Lord Shelburne and the late Chancellor[1] made so ridiculous a figure, that even they themselves appear ashamed. Mr. William Pitt, though little supported, indulges himself in shining; and does shine marvellously. His language is thought equal to his father's; his reasoning much superior; and no wonder, if at all good! He is less deficient, even when speaking on affairs of money; and in his last speech had more fire than usual. Is not all this wonderful at twenty-three? Is not it wonderful, when he can shine, though within the orbit of Mr. Fox, and opposed to him?

This is all that is memorable, but a new suicide. A Mr. Powell, a tool of Lord Holland, and left by him in the Pay Office, was dismissed last year for a deficiency in his

Letter 2413.—[1] Lord Thurlow.

accounts of 70,000*l.* It is not yet known whence this happened; nor do I know, however ill the appearance, that he was guilty of dishonesty. Still, he had sworn to a false account, and was to be prosecuted for perjury. Mr. Burke, on succeeding Colonel Barré in the Pay Office, restored this man and another [2] disgraced at the same time,—as Burke says, from commiseration of their distracted shame. Great censure was passed on that restoration. Mr. Burke vehemently defended himself in the House, and was supported; but the men were given up in two days; and in two days more Powell cut his throat.

This happened as if to convince the newly-arrived French that self-murder is a weekly event in this country. We have not only the Duc de Chartres, but three ladies of the court, the Ducs de Coigny [3], Fitz-James, and Polignac, husband of the Queen's favourite, and various others, and more coming. These wise men from the East, like those of ancient time, are led by their star to a stable; their great object is Newmarket; at least, the Royal Duke's horses and dogs are so much his taste, that he not only has *them* on his buttons, but their copulations; and, at the first dinner made for him, pointed out the particular representations to Lady Duncannon. George Selwyn said well, 'that buttoning was worse than unbuttoning, as there might be some reason for the one, but there could be none for the other.' As our newspapers take as great liberties as any Prince of the Blood, they have made due mention of such vulgar indelicacy; and, as it gave great offence, his Serene Highness has not exhibited his stud and kennel any more.

The papers say that the Imperial freebooters, male and female, have remitted their invasion of Turkey, on having

[2] Charles Bembridge, Accountant in the Pay Office.

[3] Louis François Henri de Franquetot (1737–1821), Duc de Coigny.

all the demands complied with; but, as they covet all, I should not think pusillanimity would rebate their appetites. Are vultures tamed by one bellyful?

Our lawyers flatter me, that one more session will complete the discussion of Cav. Mozzi's affair. Without Mr. Duane I do not know what we should have done. He is patient, cool, attentive, and very intelligent. I must do justice to Mr. Sharpe, who really is very active and zealous for the Cavalier, and does not seem in the least in concert with Lucas, whom nothing but the authority of two such old lawyers could baffle. Not but he has entrenched himself so well, that I think he will maintain more than I expected.

Mr. Robert Walpole, your diplomatic brother at Lisbon[4], is come over for a few months; and has brought a young wife, the daughter of a Scottish merchant settled there, who is the phenomenon of the day. She is a regular beauty, but in my eyes less pleasing than my nieces, the Waldegraves and Miss Keppel[5]. The last, with a little too much plumpness, has a most divine face, with exact features, beautiful skin, and sweet countenance. Lady Horatia is extremely pretty, and like the Duchess; but not of that great style and commanding glory. Lady Maria, the handsomest of the three sisters, has a spirit and sensible vivacity, with a perfect person and lovely hands and arms, that make her more charming than an irreproachable beauty, as Mrs. Robert Walpole is. The Duchess of Devonshire[6], the empress of fashion, is no beauty at all. She was a very fine woman, with all the freshness of youth and health, but verges fast to a coarseness. A more perfect

[4] Fourth and youngest son of Horatio, first Lord Walpole, and Envoy at Lisbon. *Walpole.*

[5] Anna Maria, eldest daughter of Frederick Keppel, Bishop of Exeter. *Walpole.*

[6] Lady Georgiana, eldest daughter of John, Earl Spencer. *Walpole.*

model than any of them, but in miniature, Lady Jersey[7], is going to Paris, and will be very angry if they do not admire her as much as she intends they should. Good night! You perceive by my babble that I have nothing to say, and fill my paper with any trifle.

[7] Frances, wife of George Bussy Villiers, fourth Earl of Jersey. *Walpole.*

END OF VOL. XII

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